DISSENT

CHAOS IN OUR CITIES

Initiation for Whitey . . . *Jeremy Larner*
Detroit After the Tragedy . . . *Bernard Rosenberg*
The Politics of Housing . . . *Chester Hartman*

Democracy & Underdeveloped Nations
A Debate: DENNIS WRONG & ROBERT HEILBRONER

The Cold War in Retrospect
ARNOLD KAUFMAN

The New Politics Box
WASHINGTON HENRY

Appalachia: The Dismal Land
HARRY CAUDILL

The Fallacies of Fulbright
WALTER GOLDSTEIN

The American Behemoth
Concentration of Wealth in the U.S. Corporations
IRV BELLER

NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 1967 95c.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

AMONG OUR CONTRIBUTORS

JEAN BLOCH-MICHEL, a French writer and critic, is one of the editors of *Preuves*. . . . CHESTER W. HARTMAN is with the Joint Center for Urban Studies of MIT and Harvard. He teaches city planning at Harvard, is a visiting lecturer at Yale, Associate Fellow at the Institute for Policy Studies in Washington, and was (in '64–'65) director of the Legislative Commission on Low-Income Housing for Mass. He has written articles on planning, housing, relocation and renewal. . . . HARRY CAUDILL, who practices law in Whitesburg, Ky., is chairman of the Congress for Appalachian Development and the author of *Night Comes to the Cumberlands*, which deals with the problems of Appalachia. . . . ROBERT L. HEILBRONER is professor of economics on the graduate faculty of the New School for Social Research. The latest of his many books is *The Limits of American Capitalism*. . . . Economist IRV BELLER is with the AFL–CIO's Department of Research. His article "Economic Policy and the Demands of Labor" appeared in our May–June 1967 issue. . . . JIM SWAN is a graduate student in English at Stanford University. . . . LAWRENCE W. HYMAN, author of *Andrew Marvell*, teaches English at Brooklyn College. His article "Literature and Political Action" appeared in our July–August 1967 issue. . . . JAY SCHULMAN teaches sociology at the N.Y. State School of Industrial Relations, Cornell. He has just completed a 30-month field study of the FIGHT organization in Rochester. WALTER GOLDSTEIN is presently on leave from Brooklyn College, where he teaches sociology. He is foreign relations chairman of the national board of ADA. . . . GEORGE ECKSTEIN, who lives in New York, reports on economic, social, and cultural developments for the *Gewerkschaftliche Monatshefte*, the theoretical journal of the West German trade unions. . . . MORRIS FREILICH is director of anthropology at Northeastern University in Boston. He is currently finishing two books, *Anthropological Research Methods* (to be published by Harper & Row) and another on Trinidadian peasants. . . . ARNOLD S. KAUFMAN, a frequent contributor to DISSENT, teaches philosophy at the University of Michigan. He has been active in the teach-ins and the civil rights movement.

DISSENT issued November 1, 1967, is published bi-monthly, January-February, March-April, May-June, July-August, September-October, November-December, by Dissent Publishing Corporation, 509 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10017. Subscriptions: $5.00 for one year; $8.00 for two years; $3.50 for students for one year; foreign subscriptions, including Canada, add $1.00 mailing costs per year. All payments from foreign countries must be made by United States money orders or checks payable in United States currency. Single copy, 95 cents. For special rates on bulk orders from organizations, teachers, etc., write directly to DISSENT. For information on newsstand and bookstore distribution write to: Eastern News Co., 225 Seventh Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10001.

© 1967 by Dissent Publishing Corporation. Permission to reprint any article must be obtained from the publishers. • Manuscripts will not be returned unless accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope. • Second-class postage paid at New York, N.Y. • Volume XIV, Number 6 (Whole No. 61).

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

AMONG OUR CONTRIBUTORS

JEAN BLOCH-MICHEL, a French writer and critic, is one of the editors of *Preuves*. . . . CHESTER W. HARTMAN is with the Joint Center for Urban Studies of MIT and Harvard. He teaches city planning at Harvard, is a visiting lecturer at Yale, Associate Fellow at the Institute for Policy Studies in Washington, and was (in '64–'65) director of the Legislative Commission on Low-Income Housing for Mass. He has written articles on planning, housing, relocation and renewal. . . . HARRY CAUDILL, who practices law in Whitesburg, Ky., is chairman of the Congress for Appalachian Development and the author of *Night Comes to the Cumberlands,* which deals with the problems of Appalachia. . . . ROBERT L. HEILBRONER is professor of economics on the graduate faculty of the New School for Social Research. The latest of his many books is *The Limits of American Capitalism*. . . . Economist IRV BELLER is with the AFL–CIO's Department of Research. His article "Economic Policy and the Demands of Labor" appeared in our May–June 1967 issue. . . . JIM SWAN is a graduate student in English at Stanford University. . . . LAWRENCE W. HYMAN, author of *Andrew Marvell,* teaches English at Brooklyn College. His article "Literature and Political Action" appeared in our July–August 1967 issue. . . . JAY SCHULMAN teaches sociology at the N.Y. State School of Industrial Relations, Cornell. He has just completed a 30-month field study of the FIGHT organization in Rochester. WALTER GOLDSTEIN is presently on leave from Brooklyn College, where he teaches sociology. He is foreign relations chairman of the national board of ADA. . . . GEORGE ECKSTEIN, who lives in New York, reports on economic, social, and cultural developments for the *Gewerkschaftliche Monatshefte,* the theoretical journal of the West German trade unions. . . . MORRIS FREILICH is director of anthropology at Northeastern University in Boston. He is currently finishing two books, *Anthropological Research Methods* (to be published by Harper & Row) and another on Trinidadian peasants. . . . ARNOLD S. KAUFMAN, a frequent contributor to DISSENT, teaches philosophy at the University of Michigan. He has been active in the teach-ins and the civil rights movement.

DISSENT issued November 1, 1967, is published bi-monthly, January-February, March-April, May-June, July-August, September-October, November-December, by Dissent Publishing Corporation, 509 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10017. Subscriptions: $5.00 for one year; $8.00 for two years; $3.50 for students for one year; foreign subscriptions, including Canada, add $1.00 mailing costs per year. All payments from foreign countries must be made by United States money orders or checks payable in United States currency. Single copy, 95 cents. For special rates on bulk orders from organizations, teachers, etc., write directly to DISSENT. For information on newsstand and bookstore distribution write to: Eastern News Co., 225 Seventh Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10001.

© 1967 by Dissent Publishing Corporation. Permission to reprint any article must be obtained from the publishers. • Manuscripts will not be returned unless accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope. • Second-class postage paid at New York, N.Y. • Volume XIV, Number 6 (Whole No. 61).

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

DISSENT

NOVEMBER–DECEMBER 1967

COMMENTS AND OPINIONS

Is There a Thaw in our Politics?—*by Irving Howe* 675

Detroit After the Tragedy—*by Bernard Rosenberg* 677

The New Politics Box—*by Washington Henry* 682

Letter from Paris: Le Grand Charlie a Bit Less Grand —*by Jean Bloch-Michel* 688

ARTICLES

Initiation for Whitey: Notes on Poverty and Riot —*by Jeremy Larner* 691

The Politics of Housing—*by Chester W. Hartman* 701

Appalachia: The Dismal Land—*by Harry Caudill* 715

Economic Development and Democracy: A Debate on Some Problems of the Third World —*by Dennis H. Wrong and Richard L. Heilbroner* 723

American Behemoth: The Concentration of U.S. Corporate Power—*by Irv Beller* 742

COMMUNICATIONS

Literary Criticism and Political Action—*by Jim Swan* 757

A Reply—*by Lawrence W. Hyman* 760

Riessman on Alinsky: Again—*by Jay Schulman* 761

BOOKS

The Arrogance of Power, by Senator J. William Fulbright —*reviewed by Walter Goldstein* 765

Abuse of Power, by Theodore Draper —*reviewed by George Eckstein* 768

The Moynihan Report and Political Controversy, by Lee Rainwater and William Yancey —*reviewed by Morris Freilich* 769

LETTERS 772

A SPECIAL FEATURE

The Cold War in Retrospect—*by Arnold S. Kaufman* 775

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

DISSENT is a journal devoted to the ideas and values of democratic socialism. It seeks to serve as a forum for writers devoted to these ideas and values, while also welcoming a wide variety of other opinions. Each writer speaks for himself; there is no effort made to exact editorial consensus or uniformity.

EDITOR
Irving Howe

EDITORIAL BOARD
Joseph Buttinger
Lewis Coser
Emanuel Geltman
Michael Harrington
Tom Kahn
Jeremy Larner
Norman Mailer
Henry Pachter
Stanley Plastrik
Bernard Rosenberg
Meyer Schapiro
Ben B. Seligman
Stephan Thernstrom
Michael Walzer

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS
Lionel Abel
Stanley Diamond
Erich Fromm
Paul Goodman
Murray Hausknecht
Paul Jacobs
Sid Lens
Frank Marquart
Ned Polsky
Harold Rosenberg
Herman Singer
Norman Thomas
George Woodcock
Dennis Wrong

ASSISTANT EDITOR
Edith Tarcov

A BI-MONTHLY OF SOCIALIST OPINION

To Our Readers

With our next issue—January 1968—there'll be a new DISSENT.

We'll have a new format: somewhat larger pages, livelier appearance, more attractive covers. We'll try to hold down the length of articles, while still giving scope to the occasional full-scale and fundamental essay. We'll print more topical comment, reportage, short criticisms of movies, plays, books. But we'll remain, of course, devoted to the ideas of democratic radicalism.

There'll be a strengthened editorial board, with some new editors who have been friends of the magazine in recent years and who will add their energies and ideas to our pages.

Beginning with the current issue, we plan to concentrate for a time on the problems of the American cities. A whole batch of articles is in preparation on this theme.

The price of subscription will remain the same. The price of individual copies will go up—by five cents a copy. If no one else does, we're trying to hold the line against inflation.

Meanwhile, you can help us with this expansion. A subscription blank appears on p. 700. Send a friend a year's subscription, and help DISSENT grow.

Editors

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

COMMENTS AND OPINIONS

Irving Howe

Is There a Thaw in Our Politics?

A major trend seems to be at work in American politics. The consensus of support for the Vietnam War is well on the way to disintegration. For the first time, if the polls can be trusted, a majority of the people are prepared to express discontent with the war—though the political implications of this discontent are not yet, at this moment, clear.

The signs of discontent are, however, clear. Leading Republican politicians, like Senators Morton and Thurston, have attacked the President's course in Vietnam, not because they are principled opponents of the war but because they are shrewd enough to see the erosion of popular support. Nelson Rockefeller is said to be considering a shift of line: a stronger weighting of the dove percentage in the Harris polls may persuade him that taking a mildly dovish stand is consonant with patriotism. Within the Democratic party there is very considerable ferment, first because liberals who *are* principled opponents of the war have been organizing a campaign to oppose Johnson in primaries, and second because run-of-the-mill local party leaders have begun to suspect *that Johnson may drag them down* to defeat.

None of this is yet decisive, and it remains possible that, by a clever stratagem or a kind of peace offer, the President will recoup his political strength. But at this moment, the Administration seems frozen into a posture of rigidity: it has, apparently, no ideas in regard to Vietnam except to keep slogging through, bombing, burning, and sacrificing a growing number of young Americans in a war that, short of holocaust, cannot be won.

Three very tentative conclusions suggest themselves:

1) The election in South Vietnam, rigged though it may have been, was strikingly a vote for peace. The military junta received a mere 35% of the vote; the various civilian candidates represented a majority of the voters and were almost all identified in some vague way with the idea of peace. It begins to seem that this election had, in the United States, an effect sharply different from that intended by the Johnson Administration: *it brought home to many people* the fact that the Vietnamese are desperately tired of the war and want peace at almost any price—perhaps, indeed, at any price.

2) Even those who support the Johnson Administration must admit that it

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

action; it has nothing to propose; it seems to flirt with the idea of a bombing pause and then, perhaps because is immobilized. It has no course of of internal pressures within its ranks, draws back. But the prospect of continuing the present situation seems intolerable to more and more people. Whether the current dissatisfaction will turn to the advantage of the doves or the hawks is not yet clear, though right now it favors the doves. But no one, except Everett Dirksen and John P. Roche, has any use or enthusiasm for the Johnson policy.

3) Those theoreticians of social stasis and gloom who have been bemoaning the indifference of the populace, and who have developed notions which in effect posit a mass brain-washing, have again been shown to be—if not wrong, then—precipitous and premature. Ordinary Americans may not respond to political problems with the unfailing wisdom that characterizes the writers, readers (and critics) of DISSENT; but neither are they simply a collection of middle-class slobs and unfeeling fat cats. There is much moral uneasiness in the country—far more widespread and of ultimate political significance than emerges from any protest demonstration. The processes of political change are slow in accumulating; often they are molecular and subterranean in nature; but they do occur. Who knows? Maybe once again we will have reason to feel renewed faith in the democratic idea.

What seems now to emerge from these changes in mood is the strong possibility for affecting U.S. policy in Vietnam through a mixture of unconventional and conventional methods —protest and politics, pressure and polling, both completely within the honorable tradition of democratic life. For socialists, as for liberal and other opponents of the Vietnam War, there is reason for moderate cheer: there are things we can do, right now, through the peace, trade union, and other movements, to press this country into ending the bombing of North Vietnam and enter into serious negotiations for peace. There is a feeling, among many people, that the U.S. stands at a major turning-point. Vietname, the crisis in the cities, rebellion on the campus—all are related.

A sharp turn is required: end the war press for the kind of social allocation proposed by the Randolph Budget, gradually reunify the fragmented left-liberal community. It will not be easy; nothing in politics is.

P. S.

I cannot forbear noting that some of those who have been crying out most loudly—and rightly enough—against the rigging of S. Vietnam elections are also people of "left authoritarian" persuasion who declare democracy impossible or irrelevant or even undesirable in underdeveloped countries. But if they are right in the latter claim, how can they logically protest against the *way* the elections were held in S. Vietnam? They ought simply to say that the whole idea of elections should be scrapped. Rigged those elections may indeed have been, but certainly not with the efficiency that Ho Chi Minh has achieved. Imagine a Communist-run election in which the party slate gets only 35% of the vote! But perhaps that is the true source of the contempt certain American "leftists" feel that a tin-horn military man like Ky can't get his 99% of the vote the way a Communist can? Or perhaps that is what they mean in saying that underdeveloped countries can be "modernized" only under Communist auspices . . .

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Bernard Rosenberg

Detroit: Shambles After the Tragedy

Flying back to Detroit, it dawned on me that in these riotous times you *can* go home again. I was prepared for lots of *déjà vu*. From chaos to chaos, what's a twenty-four-year interval? In my home town, where I was born and half bred, history repeats itself first as tragedy and then again—as tragedy. July '67 was July '43 all over again, only worse.

Spread out over an area greater than New York City, Detroit does things on a large scale. (It used to boast of having the largest and loudest symphony orchestra in America.) The 1943 riot that swirled around me and my fellow students at Wayne University resulted in 38 known deaths. Alfred McClung Lee, co-author of *Race Riot,* the definitive account of that sanguinary affair, tells me that he feels sure many more corpses were never found. Not even Watts could match old Detroit. For this summer the official figure is 43 dead, but Congressman Conyers claims his count is closer to 100.

The mass media, with their heavy complicity, systematically underplay death, almost all of it (as before, as ever) directly traceable to various custodians of law and order. Three cops are under indictment, two for murder and one for conspiracy; but police behavior, however savage, seems to have been examplary by comparison with that of the National Guard. Uniformed, teen-age, trigger-happy kids armed with submachine guns: these are the National Guardsmen our patrioteers exalt. They, far more than anyone else, were the killers in Detroit.

Over half a milion Negroes live in the city. Professor Leonard Moss estimates that from 20,000 to 25,000 persons were involved in the riot. Of these 7,000 were arrested. Approximately 5,400 reached precinct stations; the others were released en route. Within 48 hours, another 1,100 or so were dismissed without charges. The remaining 4,000-plus face a double ordeal: adjudication in the court room and scrutiny by social scientists.

They will be questioned, probed, tested, analyzed, and observed. Never mind how many are accused of nothing more serious than violation of curfew. Some, when they were caught in a dragnet on the hottest day of the year, had just returned from nearby beaches, still dressed in swimming attire. They too got scooped up and dragged off to permanent or makeshift houses of detention. A certain number of men and women have been temporarily lost somewhere in the system. So hasty was their disposition that weeks and months later, authorities could not locate them. But by and by all those who were snagged will be "studied" as relentlessly as they will be interrogated. And no one will worry overmuch about the question of their representativeness. Washington made an immediate down pay-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ment on the golden flow of funds available for research, liberally distributed among various psychiatrists, sociologists, and other "behavioral scientists." That money was more than government at any level has spent or plans to spend on rehabilitation. (Five cents would also be more.) Yet the ineffable Irving Louis Horowitz has already declared in *Transaction* that a majority of the Detroit rioters did not belong to the underclass. Can he so much as define his terms or explain his sample? More such nonsense will come pouring off computers and out of ideologues' mouths. It will add immeasurably to the confusion.

As of early October three snipers are under arraignment, two white Southerners and one local boy, also a paleface. No blacks. Isn't that interesting? But where have you read about it? Not in the press which puts a quietus on, or twists and distorts the few data we do have. Everyone "knows," for it has been endlessly repeated, that property damage in Detroit ran from half a billion to a billion dollars. The *New York Times,* to its great credit, kept asserting that the loss was upward of $200 million, thereby only exaggerating by upward of 100 per cent. Surely the educated guess—$70 million to $100 million—is appalling enough. Why overstate the destruction and understate the slaughter—if not to make Negroes look worse and Guardsmen look better?

Well, many Negroes and some whites looted. The cops stood around on Twelfth Street, providing passive encouragement when not actively egging people on to further depredations. So say apparently trustworthy eye witnesses. Who loots, when given half a chance to do so with impunity, during a natural or a man-made calamity? Why, anybody and everybody. At least as much as cherry pie and violence, it's the American way. Ray Girardin, the Police Commissioner since 1963, is both intelligent and humane. He objects to having his men licensed as public executioners blamelessly inflicting capital punishment on young people for their minor misdemeanors. Girardin points out that "It is one thing to shoot back at snipers, and it is another thing to shoot down a child who is looting a pair of shoes or even a television set. Property can be restored, but not life."

The cops shot in Newark, and they were damned. For a long while the cops did not shoot in Detroit, and they were damned. Can the cops do no right? It looks that way. Recently the U.S. Printing Office issued a report on police attitudes toward Negroes. The work, containing results of a national survey undertaken by consultants to the Crime Commission, indicated that a majority of policemen are racists. We learn at third hand from those privy to this document (for the report disappeared days after publication and remains unavailable) that racists were defined as policemen who consider Negroes to be *subhuman.* Whether restrained or unleashed, these ignoramuses in blue are callous and irresponsible. They should have nothing to do with serious interracial conflicts. The police function must be radically reconsidered; its abuse is increasingly dangerous.

In a rerun of 1943, the Detroit riot stopped as soon as federal troops arrived. Not one of them fired a shot on

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

either occasion; their presence, more impartial than martial, did the trick both times. For complicated reasons that had to do with insurance coverage as well as politics, bureaucracy, and character deformation, it just took them forever to get there.

When will public officials learn the elementary facts of crowd behavior? Let us recite the ABC's once again. In explosive social situations, any untoward event can precipitate the first phase of a riot. Look at Twelfth Street, the jumping heart of a black ghetto where corruption makes it possible for vice, drug traffic, gambling and after-hours drinking to flourish. Then ask yourself if it is possible to absolve an inspector about to retire from the force who orders a Sunday morning (2:00 A.M., July 22) raid on a blind pig. Pay-off or no pay-off, raids do take place; but they proceed ordinarily according to a ritual that makes arrest inconspicuous. The culprits are warned, and the paddy wagon pulls up in an alley. This time they were not warned, the paddy wagon pulled up in front, some violaters resisted, the operation was clumsy, and 83 people got rounded up—of whom 81 were immediately released.

Is it too much to claim that all this was police provocation? Bayard Rustin correctly holds that when you have inflammable material, who drops the matches on it does not much matter. Nevertheless, while that material lies around, we ought to keep an eye on every match dropper. Figuratively speaking (literally too, but that's another story), the raid constituted provocation to fire by fire-fighters in a highly combustible area. The suspicion that they wanted a fire and that they want a bigger one next time, partly to show up their enlightened Commissioner and their liberal mayor, but largely out of psychotic hatred, will be hard to dispel.

Having said so much, with a good deal more left unsaid in the form of detail which any decent journalist could have picked up as easily as I did, let me recoil a bit. Mischievous inferences have been drawn from this summer's riots over which Left-Right and Black-White extremists rejoice. As democratic socialists, we can only feel remorse for the victims of brutality and immorality. Far from being therapeutic for anyone, interracial violence in the United States is intrinsically repugnant, inexpedient, and inimical to the interests of all concerned. At the same time if riots start, they need not be allowed to run their course. As soon as the immediate cause of an outbreak generates and communicates steadily heightened animal excitement, a kind of contagion develops and the ghastly "circular reaction" goes into motion. Milling, at first aimless, gradually focuses on single objects or simple symbols; collective hypnosis spreads, social constraints dissolve, and finally, de-individualization, which is to say, total dehumanization, takes place.

When the self has been submerged in an active crowd, it needs to be rescued and revivified. Educated laymen have known this much since the pioneer formulations of Gustave LeBon, Sigmund Freud, and Robert Park. Clever rulers probably always knew it. They could foment or suppress riots, "intuitively" and delicately manipulating the individual by destroying

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

his critical self-consciousness. If you are interested in ending a riot, you try to break the spell which has created a beast that is somehow more than, and different from, the sum of its parts. You *disperse* the crowd by any of many familiar means, and you restore the rules that frenzy has shattered. Above all, you act quickly. Unchecked, the crowd soon reaches a point of no return to sanity.

You act not by shooting from the hip, which puts overheated emotions in a pressure cooker and exacerbates, as it stimulates, retaliatory action. Neither do you sit back and simply observe a fatal sequence of stages as the "carnival spirit" degenerates into uncontrollable mayhem and murder. The police force in Newark by overreacting and the police force in Detroit by underreacting until it was too late, failed to follow any part of this prescription. Each department in its way was wrong, and both deserve to be damned.

What to do when hostility comes near the boiling point could be seen this year in Tampa (of all places) where white-helmeted semi-delinquent Negro kids went out to cool their hotheaded friends. And New York once again, providentially, perhaps miraculously, proved instructive: minimal damage occurred in '43 under the firm control of Mayor LaGuardia, a colorful and courageous little man who, in an open car, toured Harlem as it began to erupt. In '67 the swarming metropolis was fortunate enough to have a charismatic square in charge. Mayor Lindsay took personally to the streets of East Harlem and used a modified Tampa technique to prevent anarchy. It worked.

For all that, if Detroit is paradigmatic—and I think it is—one more round of madness will be fatal. At this writing the riot has not fully subsided. Fire bombs are still being thrown. The town is tense, with whites and blacks polarized, communication virtually at a standstill, and despair mounting to an all-time high. A new and fairly numerous breed has appeared, composed of men who call themselves "confrontationists." On one side Black Power militants have come more than ever to the fore. They are given saturation publicity and network exposure on TV (including a notorious "documentary" which exhibited a disguised Negro prisoner, one party to the "conspiracy" that not even J. Edgar Hoover could find). Their inflammatory utterances get wide currency. "Next time we hit people, not just buildings." Or, "When the snow falls, it'll melt right away 'cause we're gonna make this city so hot, baby." Also, they are arming, with what and by how much, nobody knows.

On the other side, we behold an assortment of Birchers, deliberately emulating the Communist party apparatus by organizing under several fronts like the Catholic Laymen's League. The network of reactionary whites eager to capitalize on every backlash sentiment and exploit every new fear that grips previously moderate citizens, is generically known as Breakthrough. Although so far neglected by General Sarnoff, it has not gone unnoticed in the local newspapers, which do, however unintentionally, contribute to a vigilante spirit that is descending on white Detroiters.

Breakthrough meetings occur in different neighborhoods all over the city.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Zealots distribute handbills before these meetings, which so far attract 700 to 2,000 people at a time. The handbills ask, "Are you going to let the Rap Browns take over?" If not, then, "Come and learn how to use your guns." If you do not have enough guns, "Sign up with the National Rifle Association." Rifles are easy to buy in Michigan, guns are not; but Ohio is wide open, and Toledo—known in my time only for its multiplicity of whorehouses and gambling joints—provides a convenient arsenal. At the meetings, policemen, firemen, and military officers, usually veterans, all in civilian clothes but clearly identified by occupation, demonstrate the use of guns.

If the black and white confrontationists have their way, Detroit will set another record by staging two succesive riots without much of a lapse between them. In that case, the New Left will be only a little less ecstatic than the Troglodytic Right. At last, an apocalypse, a real showdown. And then what? I am afraid the answer is: American apartheid, or precisely the fate that Gunnar Myrdal sees in store for us, unless we start thinking in trillion dollar terms about the extirpation of domestic poverty.

Except for a farcical anti-riot bill, the repressive legislation we feared has not materialized; neither has the liberal legislation for which we hoped. Detroit is a turning point: "them niggers" will never again be "rewarded for their lawlessness." By preserving its present posture, the nation may drift into more and more desperate violence. A bigger, bloodier confrontation in Detroit, despite all that city has going for it, despite rational and devoted leaders, despite the UAW—just one more massive riot, and we will face the worst crisis in American history. Before long, Negroes are going to control the inner city they now so densely populate, with black Commissioners, a black Common Council, a black mayor. They can then be left to "stew in their own juice," politically impotent as metropolitan areas are declared to be the new electoral units. Paramilitary police could patrol the inner city's perimeters. White suburbia would live in tranquility. And the civil rights movement, currently thought to be dead or dying, will be buried for good and all.

This nightmare is almost upon us. I leave Detroit with a sigh of relief, playfully suggesting to my friends that they hand the whole place over to de Gaulle who might make just claim to it as an old French territory. *D'étroit, Cadillac, Vive la France Extérieure* and all that. But jokes do not exorcise the nightmare. As Detroit goes, so goes all of urban America.

What to do as we pick up the pieces of an increasingly heavy burden? Redouble our efforts to achieve Negotiations Now before the senseless war in Southeast Asia drains us of all our strength. Work for an enormously expanded Freedom Budget. And struggle tirelessly for integration, lest we be reduced to a single option, which is disintegration, for ourselves and all the world.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Washington Henry

The New Politics Box

"Take over NCNP!" begged a headline in the *New Politics News*, the convention bulletin of the National Conference for a New Politics, which convened in Chicago on August 30 to create some sort of "organization and action"—possibly a third ticket in the '68 elections—to end the condition wherein "we, the American people, are powerless."

This is perhaps the one true chord that the New Left has struck from the beginning: so many of us are indeed powerless—either to end the war in Vietnam, which continues to escalate beyond human control or comprehension, or to ease the tension and violence in our cities, which a Congress dominated by rural and Southern elements seems only to exacerbate. The political answers to the war, to racial discrimination, to our sometimes vicious foreign policy, surely involve the application of *more* democracy, not less—perhaps more than American politics-as-usual is ready to provide. Hence a National Conference for a New Politics, which was, in this sense, a perfectly honorable idea.

NCNP's plea to be taken over reflected its belief in "participatory democracy," wherein a political movement is put at the service of its "grassroots" membership. The plea was also justified by the fact that, until the convention, NCNP had no definite structure, membership, or program. It existed mostly as a letterhead of vaguely radical people of populist sentiment who found it difficult to work within traditional political groups or even to offer legislative proposals.

At the convention, a permissive registration system allowed practically any group on the Left to register and receive votes weighted on its own estimate of active membership. Individuals, too, could register as delegates of their own congressional districts. Some of those who came were hopeful and open; and it was sad for them to see the convention get its wish. It was taken over all right—by a dogma as simple-minded as the State Department's and by a group of manipulators who have no more interest in democracy than General Ky or Ho Chi Minh.

The cardinal point in this new dogma is that the ghetto riots are basically political in character and herald the inevitability of revolution in this country. I can't forget a beautiful college girl who batted her eyes and smiled sweetly as if she were telling me a sorority secret: "This is the best thing that could be happening. The black people are organizing at last. Revolutions are always made by a minority."

Most of the people at the convention seemed positively happy at the ghetto violence which has resulted in the death of many Negroes, and acted gloriously vindicated by the trigger-happy response of guardsmen and police. They applauded joyfully at

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

every reference to violence—as when Dick Gregory at the Coliseum rally said, "You know damn well Patrick Henry not talkin about freedom, he talkin about *doin that thing*!"

One of the least endearing things about Dean Rusk is the black-and-whiteness of his world view. To him, all revolutionaries are "Communist aggressors," however just their cause; and the rest of us are blue-eyed Steve Canyons, justified in the use of napalm, torture and saturation bombing because whatever party we are defending is *ipso facto* a bastion of "freedom." Unfortunately the New Politics conventioneers all too often invoked the mirror image of Rusk's catechism: all guerrilla fighters, to them, are engaged in "wars of national liberation," whether they are fighting, say, in Angola (which is indeed tyrannical) or Venezuela (which is fairly democratic). Furthermore, all these movements are linked with the Negro slum riots under the rubric of "black peoples the world over throwing off their imperialist masters." It is almost as though the New Politics people had turned Rusk inside out, saying, the ones you think saved are really damned; the ones you think damned are really saved—as if we could exempt ourselves from the complex world of men and politics by clutching at the straw of demonology.

The convention centered around "the black caucus," which pulled in most of the Negroes (including a Japanese girl whose badge identified her by the single word "black"), excluded whites, and remained in private session for most of the convention. No one knew the composition of the black caucus or how many Negroes it really represented, but it was generally treated as the authentic voice of black rebellion.

Some of its members found themselves threatened and stifled simply because they wanted to work with the whites. "No one can speak for the Negro," one of them said later. "The militant figure-heads do not go into the ghettos during a riot. No one can control the young people."

While the blacks were caucusing, the convention took time out to hear Martin Luther King's keynote speech at the Coliseum, in which he defined "the sickness that has been lurking within our body politic from the very beginning—the sickness of racism. . . . Historians will have to say that a great civilization died because it lacked the commitment to make justice a reality for all men." King spoke sadly and solemnly, ignoring the ruckus from the rear of the hall, where 50 young "brothers" with closed, knowing faces were jeering King and jiving for Black Power. Later they blocked the center exit, letting only blacks through and forcing white brothers to a side door. I don't know where they let King out, but having refused in advance to run for President, he never showed up at the Palmer House.

Eventually the black caucus voted 3 to 1 to participate in the convention, whereupon the separatists among them set up a "Black People's Convention" on the South Side. The black caucus, however, remained in segregation, drawing up a list of terms. Meanwhile the rest of the convention was listening to a panel which included Floyd McKissick of CORE, who invited them all to come to the Black People's Convention. Fifteen

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

minutes after McKissick left, an announcement was made withdrawing the invitation and urging delegates to call back anyone already on his way.

Although the panel was titled "Strategy for '68," most of those who spoke denounced electoral activity as immoral. In their terms, he who engages in pressure-group politics or elections will be "co-opted" by "liberal democratic money." Reform Democrat Ted Weiss of New York was booed for suggesting that "the place to attack L.B.J. is in the Democratic party." "At a time when black people are dying in the streets of Newark," said Clark Kissinger of SDS, "white people aren't even willing to give up their jobs!"

McKissick spoke "only as an observer," stating that "from now on black people in America must have their own platform rather than being a plank in someone else's." He scored the Democratic party and the labor movement for failing to support the black man's cause—and surely he was not without reason. While he wasn't denying that blacks needed sympathetic whites, he felt that their movements would have to remain separate. He had no faith in a "Henry-Wallace-type" campaign. The black man was ready, he said, to "rise up and fight for his independence," as the colonists had in 1776—one of the convention's most cherished analogies, which was repeated about as often as Rusk repeats that compromise in Vietnam would be like compromise in Munich.

McKissick also announced that the U.S. is about to start a program of "genocide" against its resident Negro population—and already has concentration camps prepared. This must have fit the demonology, for the convention accepted the statement without question or even curiosity. They merely applauded.

Judging by an early vote, just over half the convention believed that national politics were impossible, that the only way to be "radical" is to attack the national sickness King alluded to "at its roots." As represented by ex-students from SDS, they wanted to organize neighborhoods to "take over" their own housing, schools, stores and decision-making processes. Eventually they would be willing to form a national movement, but not "from the top"—that is, around issues, elections and interest groups. They have an almost pictorial image of a grass-roots movement taking hold of the American organism "from below."

But despite the revolutionary rhetoric, it was apparent that their local organizing attempts had failed to attract a significant number of the poor. Their most extravagant claim (among many lower figures) was 25,000 in groups throughout the country; probably the true figure is less than half that many. Rural groups, like the Mississippi Co-ops, may prove more durable than city groups, but there is a tendency for all groups to disintegrate when significant political change cannot be obtained by purely local action. The assumption among organizers is that many Americans would prefer small autonomous communities to participation in the American mainstream; but the evidence is otherwise, even among the have-nots.

It is obvious enough that "com-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

munity organizing" cannot address itself to problems which require national or regional legislation—such as jobs, housing and education. But even its legitimate communitarian impulses are tainted by the would-be organizer who values an ideology of primitive purity above the material gains that poor people want and need immediately. One of the delegates was gotten up like a *Chicago Tribune* cartoon of a factory hand—in battered hat, filthy work clothes and hands yellow with dirt. Speaking in a "country" accent elaborately studded with profanity, he warned one of the convention's workshops that if they fell into the hands of "big money," they would be "used" to "bait the Democratic party" into a "liberal peace platform." For him such an achievement—far beyond the resources of the NCNP—would be a disaster, because peace in Vietnam might destroy what he thinks of as his "power-base." Later I learned that the young man was an Ivy League graduate and the son of a wealthy rancher.

The high point of the convention came when the black caucus finally presented a 13 point ultimatum to be accepted or rejected without amendment. One point condemned "the imperialistic Zionist war"; another supported all "national peoples' liberation wars," including the one waged by the Viet Cong; still another called for "white civilizing committees" to be "established immediately in all white communities to civilize and humanize the savage and beastlike character that runs rampant throughout America . . ."

The few delegates who wanted to debate the points were subject to organized booing. Speaker after speaker said the issue was the "spirit" of the 13 points, not mere "comma-splitting." "Is the convention willing to trust the black man?" they declaimed, while the black caucus sat in stony silence. Finally a black woman got to her feet. "You people are the same as The System. Beause you want to control us." She was wildly applauded.

Robert Scheer, recently returned from a pleasant visit to Cairo, said he could accept all the other points but wanted to offer an amendment on Israel which would simply call for withdrawal of Israeli troops. He was ruled out of order by the chair. The body then voted not to let Scheer speak. "It's the new democracy," said Scheer ironically. The 13 points were voted on as a bloc and endorsed 3 to 1.

Why did the convention do this? Probably most of them knew that the Arab countries (former slavers, who do not consider themselves black, despite anyone's rhetoric) had vowed to "exterminate" the people of Israel. Probably they knew too that Israel is far closer both to socialism and democracy than the various Arab dictatorships.

"I as a radical have never supported anything I didn't believe in, but thou-

IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

Charles Beard and the Founding Fathers

by Richard Hofstadter

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

sands of people are here to do just that," said Martin Peretz, an NCNP board member who resigned after the convention. "The tragedy is that this comes at a time when Americans are interested in issues of war and peace, civil rights, social justice. But now we can't talk to them. Not this group anyway. These people can't envision success. They want to drag everyone with them into the apocalypse."

"How can I organize white people by telling them they're savages and I've come to civilize them?" asked a boy who wanted to organize. "In California we had 62 Negro elected officials —and only 3 came from all-black districts," mourned a California Negro delegate.

Beneath the spectacle of abasement, a shadow of condescension lurked. In some ways the conventioneers were treating their Negro members as if they were emblems of savage goodness too crude to bear the scratch of criticism. Is it a mark of respect to disagree with a man, but refrain from argument? Like the unsigned comic books in the hallways moronically designed to show the similarity between Negro and Viet Cong, the white capitulation was an insult to Negro intelligence. Not once during the conference did a speaker challenge the concept that the black man is fighting a universal war with the white—as though blacks or whites could not have reason enough to fight among themselves. If only one delegate could have stood up and asked for the Black Power position on Ibo vs. Hausa in Nigeria!

The next morning the black caucus occupied a special roped-off section—as in a Southern movie house, only this one was front and center. Like McKissick before him, James Forman of SNCC was escorted to the platform by a flying wedge of bodyguards. A sepulchral young man in skullcap and shades, rings and bracelets, gestured at the audience with a crooked hand. As Forman spoke he was flanked by two "enforcers." Others sat on the stage or stood in front of it, arms crossed, glaring stonily at the audience.

In the middle of his speech Forman declared himself chairman and passed a series of resolutions, including a condemnation of a future American military intervention in behalf of the government of South Africa. A woman rose with a point of order: "I'm sorry, lady," Forman sneered. "You're out of order." "Are you a dictator?" someone shouted. "Yes, Im a dictator. You can break up this conference if you want to. It's perfectly all right with me." An enforcer shook a wooden stick.

Forman laughed. "Jesus Christ, man, we can't have any fun!" Most of the delegates laughed and applauded. "Don't take that too seriously—no,

DISSENT

Have you moved?

•

Send both old and new address to:

DISSENT: 509 Fifth Avenue
New York, New York 10017

•

Allow three weeks for change to become effective

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

wait a minute, I need not apologize!" More applause. Forman went on to denounce "the liberal-labor coalition" that he imagined had convened the NCNP. No one corrected him. "We're going to liberate you whether you like it or not!" Wild applause. The whites would take anything dished out to them if only the men dishing it were black.

That night there were two Negro teen-agers riding the elevators. They glared with loathing at a white man nearby. "Dig! A white cat with a black power button! Man, do you look jive!"

The great issue of the next day was whether the black caucus would be allowed to vote 50 per cent of the convention's votes—as a bloc. Some delegates were extremely disturbed at what they described as a violation of democratic procedures, but one speaker after another from the Dubois Clubs got up to denounce "formal democracy" as a "tool of fascism." Sound familiar? When the motion passed by more than 2 to 1, the Dubois people led the audience into that staccato clapping so often heard in conventions of the thirties and forties.

It then seemed the convention might nominate a third ticket after all, for the Dubois people had a few representatives inside the black caucus who wanted to pull American Negroes into exactly a "Henry-Wallace-type" campaign. Since some delegates had left, there were 23,000 votes represented on the floor, while the black caucus had been assigned 28,000—enough to control the convention with a single vote-card. Luckily more moderate elements were able to keep the convention from falling utterly into the hands of an organized minority. The black caucus was warned, and agreed to a compromise. A rambling and contradictory resolution was passed, calling for two future committees: one to coordinate community organizing and another to convene a convention for a national ticket. The ticket was to be put on the ballot only in those states where "organizers" would support it.

Late that night I saw Arthur Waskow, one of NCNP's original leaders. He was very happy. "You see," he said, "we got together. Now whites can organize whites and blacks can organize blacks. I objected to the white delegates castrating themselves before the blacks, but maybe I was wrong. You see, a lot of young people came here wanting to be radicals but really liberals. And they got radicalized at this convention; we've radicalized a whole lot of people. And maybe castration was the first step."

By this definition a radical is a castrated liberal.

Hoping to clear the matter up, I asked one of Waskow's friends what it means to be "radicalized"? "To be free of hangups," he replied.

The next day the convention adjourned without once having discussed a substantive issue. Its consistent concern was itself and its own purity; the outside world intruded only by references to a ritualized fantasy of The System vs. The Liberation Movement. As far as its impact on the American people is concerned, the convention was like one of those boxes from which an arm appears to shut the box off.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Jean Bloch-Michel

Le Grand Charlie—A Bit Less Grand

"He made a mistake"—this confused admission of his followers may herald the end of the de Gaulle myth. The French role in the Middle East crisis last summer not only shocked de Gaulle's followers; it made them aware there was something wrong with his thinking. And since the study and interpretation of the General's psychology are major factors in French politics, everybody is trying to figure out the causes of this disastrous series of errors.

Some blame de Gaulle's counselors for giving him wrong advice. It seems that our intelligence service felt Israel would not be able to achieve air superiority and would be forced by the Arabs to fight a long war, with the attending danger of a Vietnamese type of "rot."

Then there is the theory of the "cold monsters": a state cannot afford to have sentiments and France, like England before her, must have only interests, not friends. A few million Israelis count for less than the hundreds of millions of Arabs, with their oil and with French economic and cultural investments in their lands.

There is also the explanation given by the General himself at an Elysée reception, which seems to come from a comedy by Molière. *"I told them not to attack,"* he said. They disobeyed—and so were expelled from the Gaullist paradise.

The final and most likely explanation is this: any help given to Israel would have meant alignment with the United States. The General's anti-Americanism, drove him into the other camp.

These explanations offer some insight, but none is sufficient to explain de Gaulle's monumental error. I would put it this way: de Gaulle has not understood the lesson of Cuba and Vietnam. He doesn't know—or doesn't want to know—that Russia and the United States have reached an unshakeable agreement on one point: they will not go to war with each other. He believed that the Middle East confrontation could, or even would, draw them into a world war. And so, in accordance with a nineteenth-century idea of diplomacy, de Gaulle aligned himself with the "weaker" party in order to achieve a balance of power in the best English tradition.

But the world of today is not the Europe of yesterday. Also—though de Gaulle will never admit it—the weight of France in today's balance of power is slight.

These shocks have been serious for the Gaullist majority, which was already much weakened by the elections and the natural precautions being

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

taken for the forthcoming succession.

The French Left has also been affected; for Left and Right in France are parallel in both unity and disunity. The Left became united in 1967, because the Right had a coherent and monolithic majority which a divided Left could not confront in an election. Since the Gaullist UNR remained disciplined in two parliaments, the Left had to match this discipline. Hence, the birth of the Federation of the Left and the electoral—or maybe post-electoral—pact with the Communists. But whenever the Left does not face a united and disciplined opponent, its unity tends to disintegrate.

France is returning gently to the political patterns of the Third and Fourth Republics. Gaullism started as an almost instinctive reaction of the French electorate to a situation—the Algerian War—with which it felt unable to cope. Later, Gaullism fulfilled its desire for stability and catered to the rudimentary antiparliamentarism that has always existed on the French Right. The election of 1959 was, in this respect, significant: the great majority of the Gaullist deputies had no political past and were elected on the strength of their political innocence. Poujade's cry, *faites sortir les sortants!* (Kick the rascals out!) has always appealed to a considerable number of French voters who see the deputies as clowns or profiteers. And if these did little more for eight years than say "yes" to anything the government asked of them, that also appealed to voters who want "serious" politics, not interminable debates on subjects they know little about.

But now, there has been a return to the old parliamentary patterns, to the multiplication of groups and "nuances" within them, and all this has penetrated the very Gaullist majority that was supposed to prevent it. The centrifugal movement was started not so much by the pranks of the so-called Gaullist Left as by the Right Gaullist Giscard d'Estaing, when he asserted his freedom. For it had been the French Right that, by its very nature, had gathered most strongly around de Gaulle. He represented authority, the fight against the parties, contempt for politics—even if his policies, in Algeria and in France, often went against its grain.

The General has always looked down on the Gaullist "Left," even though it approved his major policies more enthusiastically than the Gaullist "Right." For to be of the "Left" is to give politics a significance that Gaullism refuses to see. It means the wish for a political life inspired by the desires of the voters, and nothing displeases Gaullism more than such a reliance on the popular will. Politics, in the monarchical conception of Gaullism, is the preserve of the government. It may give occasional explanations to Parliament, and also demands periodically a massive approval, granted without previous discussion, by the people—or the Nation, as the General puts it. "Gaullism of the Left" is a matter of a few individuals, without a following. They have no support in the country and are unlikely ever to obtain it. Occasionally they agitate; but a paternal command is enough to stop them.

It's a very different story with the true French Right, which has been the backbone of Gaullism, though often ill at ease with it. Gaullism has,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

indeed, satisfied the secondary ideas of the Right: nationalism, authority, prestige, independence, xenophobia; it has also satisfied, for obvious reasons, some of its interests. But the Right has never forgotten that de Gaulle's postwar government, a Communist-Socialist-Catholic coalition, was responsible for the nationalizations of industry. Its great hero is Antoine Pinay, a provincial *notable* who is the epitome of moderation: he has passed from moderate Petainism to moderate Gaullism. Still, the Right dislikes the sumptuous austerity of the regime and its belief in an active economic role for the state.

Giscard d'Estaing is trying to appeal to the moderates, the center of the electorate. He knows they like neither Gaullism nor de Gaulle; but they like instability and political crises even less. Their attitude is "Yes . . . but." Giscard d'Estaing hopes to win them over after the General is gone. Even as de Gaulle tries to present to the country an image of an unchanged parliamentary majority, Giscard is ruining that image. As long as de Gaulle is there, Giscard and his men will remain within the majority. But they have an eye on the succession. Giscard has disobeyed all orders from de Gaulle to restore the institutional link between his group and the majority of Gaullists. But his Independent Republicans continue to exist.

Since Gaullism is losing its coherence, its name will no longer ensure an electoral victory. As soon as the Independent Republicans began to feel they were Giscardians rather than Gaullists, the former Radicals and Popular Republicans began to feel the attraction of their old labels, which still mean something—and this is by no means certain about Gaullism without the General.

All this was going on when the Middle East crisis broke. De Gaulle's attitude shocked and troubled many sincere Gaullists.

The government's foreign policy was now for the first time openly opposed by a large majority. It was so large that even the French Communist party rapidly moderated the anti-Israeli attitude it had adopted.

But more, French pro-Israeli sentiment has not always been pure. For many, Israel's victory over the Arabs was a revenge for our defeat in Algeria. Pro-Israelis who paraded in the streets of Paris often chanted *Israel vaincra* (Israel shall win), a phrase with much the same rhythm as the *Algérie Française* of ten years ago.

Finally, a considerable part of French public opinion—the whole Right, all the moderates and a part of the Left—took a very dim view of France's alignment with the Soviet position. The crisis of Gaullism caused by the General's foreign policy is not likely to prove fatal. Mistakes in foreign policy are politically less calamitous than bad luck at home—or even than doing the right thing abroad. After all, nobody reproaches Guy Mollet for his Suez venture where he was clearly in the wrong, while Pierre Mendès-France had to wait ten years before the French forgave him for being right in Indochina. Gaullism is crumbling not because of Israel but because it has failed to destroy or transform a natural French political tradition—the tradition of diversity—which is now finally coming back into its own.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Jeremy Larner

INITIATION FOR WHITEY: NOTES ON POVERTY AND RIOT

As I write the slum areas of several dozen large American cities have been ravaged by Negro rioters and by the cops and guardsmen who put them down. For urban Negroes, the pull-back of the poverty program may have been that final straw which broke down their habitual patience and resignation. The ballyhooed War on Poverty was sabotaged, according to the burgeoning number of left ideologists, by an essentially racist country conducting an imperialist war in Asia and bent on holding down exploited dark-skinned masses everywhere. Whether or not such generalizations are justified, the hysteria which prompts them finds ready symbols in the bombing escalation in Hanoi and toward the Chinese border, in the photos of "Vietnam-type" tanks rumbling through the streets of Newark, in news broadcasts announcing that Viet Cong are flushed out of tunnels with "anti-riot" gas.

There are others on the left, myself included, who still see America as less than monolithic, who insist that there are forces available in this country to change both foreign and domestic policy. For us, American resources have been tragically misspent, aims deflected and purposes misguided. We still insist that there is a fight worth fighting on the battleground of American politics—in the interests of not only the Negroes but all the people.

For the time being, however, the argument has been vacated by a cycle of paranoia, wherein the lies, chauvinism, sweeping historical analogies, self-righteousness, and violence of American policy-makers are reflected in perfect miniature by the demagogues of American racism, off their rockers black and white alike and ready to give no quarter until their pain and rage are satisfied. Political emotion bounces from far Right to far Left, with no room anywhere for the constructive analysis so desperately needed if American democracy is to survive in any viable condition.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Stokely Carmichael has been to Cuba, singing loon-songs of world-wide guerrilla warfare. But Richard Hughes, the liberal governor of New Jersey, is warning that we must draw a line to separate us from "the jungle"; and the disgraceful Ninetieth Congress passes legislation which only punishes the cities and prolongs the horror in Vietnam.

Yet when the poverty program began it drew thousands of previously disenfranchised poor people who saw in its pitifully inadequate funding an opportunity to create institutions of social equity, and who insisted they were all the more American to do so. Everywhere poverty funds were available, new elements who had never been active in politics came forth to struggle with traditional power groups and in many cases to make space for themselves in the political structures of their communities. Anyone but the most rigid determinist would have to acknowledge positive possibilities in the ferment created by the beginnings—and the idea—of a war on poverty.

Still, the ghettos remained, Vietnam drew off funds, and local party hacks acted swiftly to eviscerate programs. The gains of the poverty program, like the gains of the civil rights movement, have led mainly to bitterness and a sense of promises betrayed. In an atmosphere of frustration, anger and expanded freedom, desperate alternatives are quickly put forward. One is the idea of "Black Power"—which at its best involves developing the ghettos (now partially gutted) as economic and political "power bases," at its worst reinforces the existing stalemate of separation and racial mistrust and drives away the liberal forces who are needed to speed the dissolution of that stalemate. Frequently connected with the Black Power slogan is the idea of revolutionary violence—for some a religion, others a therapy—which seems in this moment of rioting and backlash an inevitable but hopeless development.

All of which presents problems, to put it mildly. Even before the rioting, the poverty program had raised serious issues in relation to the welfare state and the problem of democratic participation. Now, as violence raises the ante and there is no sign of slackening pressure abroad, there has emerged among radicals and liberals an apocalyptic yet personally exculpating world view in which the United States stands revealed as having been all along the representative of total reaction —history's antithesis, as it were, which in the throes of self-annihilation will liberate humanity.

If this is gospel truth, then speculation is mere distraction. But once one does indulge in thought, monistic historical and political assumptions won't go very far toward describing or explaining the rather complex set of circumstances which surround American poverty

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and our various attempts to cope with it. Let me propose the virtues of a double-minded attitude—for purposes of action as well as analysis.

II

Most radical and liberal commentators are quick to condemn what they correctly describe as America's "two-faced" attitude toward poverty. On one hand America recognizes that certain elements among the poor cannot be absorbed into the world of steady, responsible work. It therefore gives them the dole—but under extremely degrading circumstances. On the other hand America perpetuates the myth that it is an open society in which all can find honorable work. For those who have fallen by the wayside, it provides "social services."

The activist critics of the poverty program often try to resolve this situation by urging that poor people are just as capable and self-sufficient as anyone, and that all they need to set them on a level of social and economic equality is a regular dole—as a matter of right, not charity. They also insist that the poor themselves should be the main administrators of poverty funds—an idea which influenced the OEO's original concept of Community Action Projects. (For certain foundation-financed theorists, "community support" is a negative term, because it involves "condescending liberals." "Elected officials" are anathema to certain middle-class poverty leaders, because they inevitably "serve the interests of the middle class.")

There is much truth in these strictures. Anyone in contact with the inhabitants of urban slums cannot fail to be impressed with a kind of realistic wisdom which, while not propelling its possessors up the ladder of American success, manages to provide sustenance, pleasure, and in some cases a version of affluence. Slum-dwellers may not run their affairs in accordance with the standard models, but they are capable of running their own affairs. And the investigatory, punitive system of welfare only hampers them. To cite only the most glaringly destructive feature, it may force a husband to leave or pretend to leave his family so that his wife may collect Aid to Dependent Children.

Yet for all its saving graces, its toughness, flexibility and hard-boiled humor, the culture of poverty is self-defeating and self-perpetuating. One thing the poverty program has proved is that simply turning over funds and programs to the poor does not in itself enable them to transform the circumstances that keep them poor.

Among these circumstances is the deep-grained philosophy of the hustle, which sees society and personal relations as a series of power games. Granted, there is truth enough to such a view—especially when

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

one is looking up from the bottom. But hustling as an outlook or as a mode of activity finally cannot comprehend the various problems which have to do with learning, training, saving, postponing—and other attitudes necessary to achieve full economic participation in an increasingly technological society, whether one is "middle-class" or not. In some cities—though no one likes to admit it—the hustling view of life has caused Negro youngsters to turn down decent jobs in favor of a more free-wheeling style of livelihood. The philosophy of hustling must be undermined and destroyed by any poverty program worthy of being taken seriously. Hustling will be given up only when it is the least useful defense—which is to say, only when jobs with futures are provided, jobs which involve a meaningful connection with the larger society. Furthermore, job-holders must be trained to see and use that connection, probably while they are on the job. There are some respects in which it is not enough merely to pay the poor.

HARYOU in New York is one of the many Community Action Projects which suffered from a too-loose distibution of funds, resulting not only in shortages but in cases where a few hustlers were accused of taking up to 100 per cent kickbacks from the kids they hired. Perhaps the most uncomfortable aspect of HARYOU was its hiring of black nationalist youths in sinecures designed to keep them from touching off riots. For at least one summer this end was achieved. But what do you teach a kid when you pay him a government salary to threaten the government or to spread mindless propaganda? Precisely that life is a hustle—that might not only makes right but is identical with it. Since he has the pay-off already, why should he bother with any form of education or self-discipline? And finally, how could political or social ideals be anything more to such a youth than expressions of class or race or personal drives for power?[1]

Yes, we have failed to make our American representative system truly representative—we have left a segment of our population powerless and impoverished. Yet poverty programs turned over entirely to "local" groups were often at least as corrupt as programs run through the standard political bureaucracies. And often they were even less representative of the people in the neighborhoods. Nepotism flourished, minority factions usurped whole organizations, and an inordinate amount of money was siphoned into plans, studies, staff and equipment.

---

1 Andrew Kopkind echoes this attitude in *The New York Review of Books* (August 24, 1967), where he states that "Morality, like politics, starts at the barrel of a gun." Presumably he learned this from "the underground press, the speeches of Malcolm, the works of Fanon, the songs of the Rolling Stones and Aretha Franklin," which he cites as "the important literature now."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Where do we go from here? Somehow programs have to involve linkages with the mainstream of society—for the benefit of all concerned. It is not enough to turn the slums over to the slum-dwellers: that is too much like what they already have, whether you call it "participation" or penury. Real participation would involve openings beyond the ghetto into areas of massive economic opportunity and retraining. The culture of the ghetto must be absorbed and utilized—which is not the same as being destroyed. The ghetto itself must be destroyed.

Some radicals unwittingly contradict themselves in calling for welfare reform. Basically they insist on the dole in recognition of the fact that the poor are not fully employable. Fair enough. But at the same time they maintain that poverty funds must be turned over exclusively to the poor. What makes them think that people who are not fully employable are fully capable of administering poverty funds? Even in cases where they are, the most successful local programs plus a steady dole would not by themselves break up American poverty; they would at best be no more than the mainstays of an isolated community in an inferior economic position. More important than either the dole or subsidized autonomous projects is the need for a full-scale national economic program, without which local projects are doomed to dry up from lack of umbilical connections.

If the issue is reduced to whether there should be a guaranteed income or not, of course there should be. But work is even better. To speak realistically, people on dole will not have "dignity," no matter what. We can and should eliminate the abuses, the condescension, the costly and degrading check-ups. But surviving on a welfare check or an income subsidy is not the same as having a future. And for most people, it's not necessary—not when there is so much work to do in this country. People who are now battling the welfare inspectors increment by increment could be staffing hospitals, rebuilding cities, providing services, perhaps creating whole new communities.

If such an overall effort were under way, it would be matched by individual efforts to participate in it. The worker looking above him would see opportunity and not merely a closed corporation. He would have an incentive to become skillful. I am mindful that the American ideal of making one's self has been for some a vicious myth. But channels for doing just that have always been open, and remain some of our most valuable social possessions. We need more channels, more representation, a larger, fairer dole—and nationally planned work programs involving both middle-class and poor people engaged together in meaningful reconstruction of their own country.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

We cannot hope for a magic resolution of our double attitude toward poverty, since poor people are in fact burdens as well as honorable victims. Perhaps the most productive stance would be an open acknowledgement of ambiguity—so that we may simultaneously proceed with an improved welfare system *and* an economic program which could free every individual capable of being freed. These efforts are not mutually exclusive.

III

One problem for the boy growing up in the ghetto is that models are lacking to show how one might successfully enter the world of trade and technology in which most American males are employed. The young Negro who is successful in "straight" employment is apt to move away—and become identified with the larger world, which is seen from the ghetto as a white world.

The power who remains "on the street" (or parked in his Cadillac) and thus available for identification, is the hustler. I have already mentioned the hustler's credo of might equals right, but there is another aspect of his makeup worth underscoring in terms of its educational implications. Which is simply that the hustler knows all the answers. He picks them up—as Malcolm X did—by paying attention all day long to power plays. He is shrewd about the use of force, at least within his own precincts. But when it comes to knowledge, what he mainly wants is a ready-made line, a set of hard-nosed aphorisms—so that he will have a quick answer in any threatening situation. He wants not to be caught short verbally, for he knows a sharp retort is another form of power.[2]

The trouble is that street knowledge can't risk unsureness, can't risk leaving questions open. So that if something can't be picked up

---

2 "'John,' I said, 'how many degrees in a circle?'

"He said, 'Three hundred and sixty.'

"I drew a square. 'How many degrees in that?' He said three hundred and sixty.

"I asked him was three hundred and sixty degrees, then, the maximum of degrees in anything?

"He said 'Yes.'

"I said, 'Well, why is it that Masons go only to thirty-three degrees?'

"He had no satisfactory answer. But for me, the answer was that Masonry, actually, is only thirty-three degrees of the religion of Islam, which is the full projection, forever denied to Masons, although they know it exists."

(From the chapter "Satan" in *The Autobiography of Malcolm X.*)

Like Malcolm, Stokely Carmichael lays great stress on "the power to define." Here is an excerpt from a speech to the students of Morgan State College, as transcribed in *The Movement*, June 1967:

"Now then we come to the question of definitions. We will talk about that for a

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

in a quick formula, it will likely be banished from consciousness. Malcolm, for instance, with his razor wit, had at any point in his life —whether as zoot-suit hipster, Black Muslim, or pan-African nationalist—a complete set of consistent answers which turned complexity into a captivating simplicity. After a speech of Malcolm's, his followers repeated his answers by rote—as they still do in the junior nationalist "five-percenter" groups, where youngsters are given a catechism to memorize, full of anthropological and historical absurdities.[3]

No doubt poor people are not the only ones susceptible to the all-or-nothing concept of learning. But for poor boys such a misconception is fatal, because it means that training and education are seen as initiation—as into a club, or a secret society—rather than as an open process. There are sad stories among poverty workers of Negro youths who approach, say, psychologists, and announce, I've seen what you do, man: why can't I take your place? On being told they must go through a specific training process over a period of years, they throw up their hands.

What happens these days to the large majority of boys who aspire to be "street-wise"—who in fact *must*, simply to survive—but who can't make it big as hustlers and who lack some lucky talent that would enable them to rise in the world unassisted? Naturally they resent the white establishment, whose official members they see as licensed hustlers —licensed, in some cases, to treat Negroes brutally. These boys don't want training—they *want in right away*. If Whitey won't give them an initiation, then they'll initiate Whitey.

If he goes into the Armed Services, a Negro boy may get his desired initiation. But if he stays on the street, the young Negro is likely to collide with another type—exemplified by Carmichael and LeRoi Jones,

---

while. It is very, very important because I believe that people who can define are masters.

"I want to read a quote. It is one of my favorite quotes. It comes from *Alice in Wonderland,* Lewis Carroll. . . .

" ' "When I use a word," Humpty Dumpty said in a rather scornful tone, "I mean just what I choose it to mean, neither more nor less." "The question is," said Alice, "whether you can make words mean so many different things." "The question is," said Humpty Dumpty, "who is to be master." '

"That is all. That is all. Understand that . . . the first need of a free people is to define their own terms. . . ."

Note that Mr. Carmichael, unlike Mr. Carroll, identifies with Humpty Dumpty.

3 ". . . if you started with a black man, a white man could be produced; but starting with a white man, you never could produce a black man—because the white chromosome is recessive. And since no one disputes that there was but one Original Man, the conclusion is clear."

(From the chapter "Saved" in *The Autobiography of Malcolm X.*)

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

among others—the successful middle-class Negro who can't bear the torment of perceiving himself a part of "white" society while masses of his people are left behind. He solves his identity problem much as does the hustler—by adopting a set of absolute answers, in this instance those of the apocalyptic black revolutionary. He offers this identity to drifting youth—an identity of innate bravery and superiority and dedication and solidarity. It is only reasonable that many a young Negro will prefer this conception of himself to that of the disadvantaged student, fighting a lonely struggle to educate himself and keep his bearings in the face of discrimination and poverty. An interaction goes on between demagogue and potential rioter not unlike the traditional interaction between Negro preacher and potential lamb of Jesus.

A white man may argue that Negro violence is not politically efficient; he may deride the intellectual inadequacy of the new black ideology; but he cannot legitimately tell a young Negro that his allegiance to the catchwords of Black Power does not make him feel better on the inside.

What of the white civil rights and poverty workers—the idealistic students, the increasingly radical social workers, the impassioned ministers—who in past years have gone into the ghettos to unite themselves with America's most urgent cause? I am afraid that many of them—at least the ones who project onto the Negro their longing for a noble savage—must share with Congress and other officials, and with society at large, a responsibility for the riots. For in many cases, *seen in terms of a might makes right perspective,* the poverty workers have been fawning—allowing themselves to be conned and worse (sometimes much worse). And this too confirms the desperate identity of superiority. The young militant has no respect for those who come to his neighborhood to tell him how great he is. If I'm so great, he thinks, then I will take what you have.

IV

Interesting that so far the rioters have attacked mainly police (with bottles and bricks and words, seldom bullets) and property. They have fire-bombed white stores, loan offices and adjacent housing. In retaliation, guardsmen in Newark smashed black-owned stores, and troops and police shot up Negro dwelling-places. Supposedly they were shooting at snipers, but one has to wonder about the existence of snipers who hit so few targets. If there were organized Negro assassins at work, it's hard to believe they could have aimed so badly. Perhaps they had reasons for aiming to miss. At any rate, the vast majority of those killed were Negroes, and in most cases few people were killed until the order

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

was given for official triggers to be pulled. Reporters have confirmed that in both Newark and Detroit, the cops and guardsmen shot at each other and at the sparks of their own bullets striking houses. In some cases, they waited in ambush to shoot up cars which failed to stop at unmanned roadblocks.

It seems clear that regardless of Black Power rhetoric—"burn this town," "shoot honkies," etc.—the main motives of those who joined in were economic. Some inhabitants of the ghetto felt they were entitled to loot white-owned stores, and that the police and troopers were agents of hostile forces. Their action examined apart from rhetoric said very simply and explicitly, "we will not endure these circumstances. You owe us more than you can ever give us."

And we do.

V

The militant—the creator of and the believer in black rhetoric—is deeply dependent on the very world he is scorning and threatening. He's not abandoning America—he can't. He wants to punish America. Far from aloof, he's deeply hurt at having been snubbed and used and moved away from. He wants America to pay attention; when he gets no response, he feels himself nothing. And he is very American in the way he goes about creating his position.

First he has an "image"—a militant image, a black image, a unique image without which one does not have access to the media. The young militant shares and feeds the American appetite for image. Already this gives him a role to play—destructive, threatening, but nonetheless part of the scene. It's better than nodding out on junk. If people are afraid of you, you exist, you know who you are.

If he relies on ideology—well, certainly the Jews, Irish, and Italians protected themselves with cynical philosophies about American opportunity (and their own superiority)—and certainly they developed their share of hustlers and hoods. I am told that the Irish riots of the nineteenth century were bloodier than anything we've yet seen from the Negroes. And righteous free-lance violence is hardly an exclusive property of Negroes, as an evening with your TV set will confirm.

As far as looting is concerned, the Negroes are small-time compared to American businessmen—and I don't mean the little shopkeepers either; I mean the swingers on Wall Street and the WASP's who head up our huge corporations. Which costs America more—riots or oil depletions? Riots or drug mark-ups? Riots or market manipulations?

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

In their roles as true believers, as masculine upholders of honor and right, unafraid to take violent action, even to die, in behalf of their beliefs, the Black Power cultists are more classically Western than the white flower ideologists out to transform human nature with drugs, youth, love, colored lights, pop music and polysexuality.

It's even possible to understand why some historians see the riots and the talk of guerrilla warfare as symptoms of the inevitable disruption that occurs whenever a new class or group forces its way into the mainstream of American society. Some years from now, their argument goes, the racial conflict will have resolved itself, and the usual variety of opinions and loyalties will flourish among a more relaxed Negro population.

Maybe so. But in the meantime it is a terrible thing to see whites and blacks locked into oratorical abstractions which only reinforce hatred and guilt and violence. It seems obvious that the Negroes will be hurt most, even as in every riot they make up a large majority of the dead and wounded. Surely of all the segregated groups that have fought against social stigmata, the Negroes—brought to this country against their will and subject to slavery, lynch law and emasculation—have the toughest fight on their hands. For that reason they are prey to the most self-destructive temptations. But for that reason also they of all people can least afford any kind of self-deception.

It is frightening to see a cycle in operation—a cycle of poverty and rhetoric, violence and backlash. American society has a tremendous job to do in terms of creating genuine economic and educational opportunities; yet apparently this job will get little more than peanuts allocated to it as long as our President is escalating the war in Vietnam. With every escalation a portion of faith is torn away from this country. The black man in the ghetto stabs at his own heart, which is also the heart of our cities, and as the ghettos burn, one hears loud crackings all around, as if the whole crazy country were on fire.

August, 1967

DISSENT • 509 Fifth Avenue • New York, New York 10017

Please enter and bill me for a subscription to DISSENT for ☐ one year ($5.00) ☐ two years ($8.00) ☐ Special Student rate: ($3.50) for one year.

NAME.....
(Please Print)

STREET.....

CITY.....STATE.....ZIP.....

PAY NOW BY CHECK OR M. O. HELP US REDUCE BILLING COSTS, THANKKS/

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Chester W. Hartman

THE POLITICS OF HOUSING

There is a great deal of ferment in the housing field at present, but not much action. Rhetoric has far outrun (and in a sense diverts attention from) any corresponding commitment to allocate resources. The housing problem is shaking down to an easily identifiable form, following resolutions of the anomalies caused by the Depression and War. Those with adequate income by and large are getting adequate housing, and the private sector, strategically assisted by the government—notably via FHA and VA mortgage insurance and urban renewal—works moderately well to satisfy the housing needs of middle- and upper-income groups.

The vestigial housing problem, although by no means trivial—at a minimum 12 million U.S. families are living below acceptable standards—is composed of specific "types": families and individuals who lack and have little hope of earning adequate income; nonwhite minorities (with and without adequate income); the elderly; rural slum dwellers; and the vague catchall category, "multi-problem families." It is now absolutely clear to all but the most resistant that the vast majority of these 12 million families are not going to secure decent housing through the processes of "normal" mobilitiy, and that existing government programs to aid this sector of the population are hopelessly inadequate to the task, qualitatively as well as quantitatively.

At the present we are being bombarded with new ideas, some good, some not so good, some really innovative, some merely rehashes of old proposals. Model Cities, rent supplements, instant rehabilitation, "turnkey," Percy Plan, Kennedy Plan, Ribicoff Plan are but a few of the terms flying thick and fast over conference tables and speakers' platforms. But it is still a time of rhetoric, not of results, nor even of realistic plan-making. The issue is primarily one of money. The costs of achieving the National Housing Goal, established nearly 20 years ago ("a decent home and a suitable living environment for every American family") are big, and as a nation we just don't seem to want to spend big money these days for anything but killing Vietnamese. We don't

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

even have any good estimates on the costs of attaining this goal (in part due to the vagueness of its definition).

Based on 1960 Census data on the incomes of families presently living in substandard housing and using 1959 Bureau of Labor Statistics figures on the costs of obtaining "modest but adequate" housing in metropolitan areas, a program of housing subsidization for all families in the U.S. who cannot afford decent housing on the private market might cost an additional $7–8 billion a year. This figure would be somewhat higher if housing subsidies were also to be made available to reduce housing costs for families living in standard housing who are devoting an excessive portion of their income to rent. This looks awfully large when compared with present expenditures for housing the poor (less than $400 million annually, plus whatever portion of welfare payments is used—generally speaking, wastefully—for housing). But it represents only 1 per cent of the nation's GNP and less than four months of warfare in Southeast Asia. Needless to say, there is no immediate prospect of having anywhere near the amount of money required to implement current proposals, except on a token or pilot project scale. This is the basic political fact which must underlie any discussion of housing.

But even if the problem of resource allocation could be solved, there would still be an imposing array of fundamental problems, conflicts, and decisions to be faced. It is these areas and the ways in which they are dealt with under existing and proposed programs that form the hub of this essay.

Race

Any housing program must face the fundamental fact that the overwhelming majority of white Americans are afraid of and do not want to live anywhere near nonwhite Americans, and that at least a substantial portion of the nonwhite population, if not the majority, does not consider integration into white America (at least on the majority's terms) a very high priority. This situation can only intensify as nonwhites increasingly experience and suffer the effects of second-class citizenship, and as resentment of and insurrection against this status takes ever more hostile and violent forms.

It seems quite probable that we have passed the point where massive integration of the races can be an element of a housing program that will improve the lot of the vast majority of slum dwellers, black as well as white, in a relatively short time span (say, within five to ten years). Existing residential patterns are too firmly fixed, the population shifts and disruptions required would be too massive, and popular

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

resistance to any program of this nature would be staggering. In the December 1966 *New Republic,* Frances Piven and Richard Cloward argue that stress on racial integration as a necessary component of housing programs has drained support for these programs; as a result of a policy of "either integrated housing or no housing," those most in need of better shelter have been denied the benefits of potentially helpful programs, and are in effect paying the price for goals and ideals that are less important to the poor than they are to the reformers. What has undoubtedly been true in the past for relatively meager programs, (*viz.,* Congressional curtailment of the rent supplement program and local opposition to public housing projects) will *a fortiori* be true of programs of the magnitude that have recently been suggested by more radical and impatient reformers. If, instead of producing 30,000 units of low-rent public housing annually, we embark on a program which will provide new or rehabilitated housing for a minimum of 800,000 low-income families each year, the specter of massive racial shifts would create insurmountable problems with regard to financial appropriations and site selection.

One need only look at current government low-rent housing programs to gain insight into the future. The federal government and many local authorities are now insisting on an end to lily-white public housing projects. In combination with more systematic forces (Negroes apply to public housing in disproportionate numbers because of lower incomes and a narrower range of housing choice), this policy is turning public housing into an all-Negro program, and not too gradually at that. Nationally, 53 per cent of all families in public housing are nonwhite (an increase from 43 per cent in 1954), and in many cities there are virtually no white families living in housing projects. As projects lose their all-white character, the number of white applications decreases and white families move out of the projects in increasing numbers, frequently to worse and/or higher-priced—but "safe"—housing. As Negro families apply in ever larger numbers (in Boston, where 26 per cent of public housing families are Negro, over half of all applications are now coming from nonwhite families), and as more and more projects "tip"—a process which is surely irreversible—the program will become in fact a Negro institution.

The Department of Housing and Urban Development is trying to induce localities, albeit with much difficulty, to move away from the project approach to public housing (in order to increase the possibility of racial integration, as well as for other reasons of a social and aesthetic nature). At the same time these newer forms of publicly subsidized housing (leasing of private units, public rehabilitation of

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

substandard units, joint public-private developments) are meeting a great deal of local resistance, in no small part due to the possibility of invasion of "good" neighborhoods by "problem" (*i.e.* Negro) families. Depressing as it may be to white liberals, the truth must be faced: to insist upon racial integration as a *sine qua non* of housing improvement is to consign millions of American families, white and black, to their present slum conditions for years to come.

This is not to say that a housing program must proceed on a strictly segregated basis: ample opportunity and protection must be provided for those minority-group families who value integrated living highly and are willing to endure the hardship this course may entail. But if we persist in the illusion that improvement of urban living conditions can and must be accompanied by racial integration, ten years from now we will discover that we have not progressed very far at all in solving the nation's slum problems, just as there has been but little improvement in the past ten years.

Among the newer programs and ideas, the Model Cities program seems to have accepted this argument, at least implicitly. The program rejected a true "model city" approach that had been initially proposed (attempting, on a pilot project basis, to provide solutions to all urban problems in four or five prototypical cities) in favor of a "model neighborhood" approach—providing these same solutions for an area housing no more than 15,000 persons (or 10 per cent of the city's population in the case of large cities).

While this shift was made in part to permit existing funds to go farther in political terms (more cities would get something from the program, thereby increasing its potential support), it also had the effect of allowing cities to compartmentalize the race issue. Most large cities chose one of the worst Negro slums as their model city target area. Given the program's general mandate—to improve conditions *in* the demonstration area *for* the area's resident's—the program in effect has become a "gild the ghetto" program (save in those smaller cities where poor white neighborhoods were chosen as target areas, and in the one or two larger cities where a principal objective of the program is to provide open housing opportunities for the area's Negro residents). This critical feature of the Model Cities program has not been universally lamented: in fact the more progressive newcomers to the upper echelons of the HUD hierarchy see it as a sound development. More help will go to those most in need of government assistance, and if integration is ever to come about, it will be only after the ghetto and its residents have developed economic and political strengths.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Social and Economic Integration

Related to the problem of racial integration is the question of social class integration, or heterogeneity vs. homogeneity. A good deal of overlap exists here; because Negroes tend to have lower incomes and occupational and educational attainments than whites, most whites tend to see Negroes as lower-class, regardless of objective economic and social indices. But the problem is distinct from the racial problem: it comes up as an issue among white families of different social classes and among Negro families of different social classes. And at least among some segments of the population, educational, occupational, and financial attainment are sufficient to erase most barriers imposed by race. In policy terms, the issue comes down to this: should housing subsidies require the grouping of low-income families together, apart from unsubsidized, higher income families, or should programs be developed which permit or require mixture of subsidized low-income families with families of higher income who do not receive a housing subsidy (or at least the same kind of subsidy, since in our peculiar folk logic such things as FHA insurance and urban renewal land write-downs for middle- and upper-income housing are not regarded as subsidies).

The arguments for and against "mixing" are fairly simple, although they seem to be based more on assumption and ideology than on concrete evidence. It is held by some that the grouping of low-income families creates stigma and reinforces deviant or pathological living patterns, whereas mixing low-income families together with families of higher socio-economic status (usually conceived of in terms of a marked disproportion, with the subsidized families representing 10-30 per cent of the total) will offer incentive, status, and alternative (and assumedly more desirable) models for behavior. Generally, the heterogeneity argument is buttressed by terms such as "more democratic," although why this one manifestation of inequality is chosen as a symbol of non-democracy in a society with such wide income disparities and such unwarranted poverty is unclear.

Arguments against social and ecomonic integration range from those of the economic conservative worried about the effect on incentive of having persons of different incomes, paying different rents, living in essentially identical quarters—to those of the sociologist, concerned that differences in life-style, child-rearing patterns and the like will in fact exacerbate inter-class tensions and conflict rather than create mutual understanding and a "rub-off" effect. There is also a large group to whom such thinking represents cultural imperialism, an attempt to destroy valuable unity and vitality among low-income groups.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Most of the newer forms of public housing, as well as the new rent supplement program, represent an attempt to eliminate the worst forms of isolation and stigmatization that have characterized traditional public housing projects. The "scattered-site" type of development focuses on the problem of scale: projects should be small, located in viable neighborhoods, and designed so as to blend with existing buildings. Rehabilitation programs developed by local housing authorities rely on purchase and remodelling of substandard private buildings and offer public housing that is architecturally no different from housing that remains in the private sector. The "turnkey" approach to public housing, in which site development and construction is done by private developers who then sell the completed project to the local housing authority, also represents an attempt to avoid institutional design. Reliance on the private construction industry is purported to offer significant cost saving, too, but claims to this effect are at present of dubious validity, and if true, may derive from use of non-union labor paid at less than union scale—a "saving" that may not be in the public interest.

The leased public housing program, under which individual, privately owned units, usually in multifamily buildings, are leased by the housing authority at market rents and then subleased to public housing tenants at reduced rents, is one of the most far-reaching attempts to blur the public-private distinction. The buildings are privately owned and managed and restriction on the number of public housing tenants in any one structure makes it likely that there will be some form of economic and social mix (although this depends largely on the character of neighborhoods in which the housing authority leases its units). And nascent projects which combine public and private sponsorship of developments with mixed middle- and low-income occupancy also carry the integration idea to an extreme form, relegating the public presence to the background, so as to create no invidious distinction between the subsidized and the unsubsidized.

Finally, the rent supplement program carries this idea one step further in bypassing the housing authority altogether as agent for choosing apartments and tenants. In this program the private developer directly contracts with the Federal Housing Administration to accept a certain number of low-income tenants, and in return receives the difference between the rent established for the low-income family (25 per cent of family income) and the market rent for the unit.

A close look at the operations of these new programs provides some insight as to how we can expect the issue of heterogeneity vs.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

homogeneity to develop in the future. In virtually all cities where these newer programs have been tried, the amount of meaningful social and economic integration has been minimal, and in some cases nonexistent. In brief, where the private sector has been drawn into the public housing program and where mixing has occurred, the utmost care has been taken in tenant selection to choose only the most "worthy," middle-class representatives of the poor: intact, small families at the upper level of the public housing income range, usually white, employed and educated, with no suggestion of social problems which might cause conflict and resentment among their neighbors who "pay their own way."

These programs attempt to skim the cream off the top of the public housing population and in effect provide no information (except, by inference, negative information) about the impact of and prospects for this kind of mixing. (An ancillary effect, of course, is that by drawing these families away from the housing projects, the remaining public housing population becomes all the more atypical and deviant from the rest of society.) The average family simply is not inclined to live near low-income families which exhibit any "deviant" attributes, such as having no male head of household, having too many children, living on welfare, causing or demonstrating any of a variety of social problems. Sensing that landlords—particularly in the sellers' market that presently exists in the housing field—will not participate in a public program that risks having to rent to lower-class tenants, and that political pressures from unsubsidized families of higher income will lead to extraordinary controversy, administrators of these newer public housing programs have taken the path of least resistance and have avoided any meaningful socio-economic integration.

An inescapable conclusion seems to be that, desirable as some amount of heterogeneity may be (and whether and in what ways this may be true is still not absolutly clear), political pressures, both overt and internalized, will be such that local administrators will avoid difficulties wherever possible.

The only way in which low-income families—at least those who wish to do so—will be able to integrate themselves successfully with families of higher socio-economic status is through a type of program that has not yet been developed: *i.e.,* through creation of sovereign consumers by widespread use of rent or income supplements. The income subsidization approach does not seem feasible at present. Even if we were to achieve a guaranteed annual income (or some version thereof through a negative income tax), the levels presently being discussed would be totally inadequate to secure decent housing at present

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

market rents. The income floors being discussed are on the order of $3100 for a family of four; yet, using the 20-25 per cent rent/income ratio yardstick, decent housing costs at least twice that much in urban areas. (The Bureau of Labor Statistics' 1959 model budget for a family of four in Boston required $6100; over $1200 of this sum went for rent, in order to achieve a "modest but adequate" standard of living, and that figure has undoubtedly risen in eight years.)

A direct and adequate subsidy of the housing expenditures of poor families, through a device such as rental certificates, available for new or rehabilitated standard housing, might permit social and economic heterogeneity, providing mechanisms exist to insure non-discrimination against certificate holders by private landlords. Such controls over landlords and developers might be secured via incentives to participate in the program provided in the form of low-interest construction and rehabilitation financing or assistance in site acquisition; in exchange for this the private developer would agree to accept as tenants a certain percentage of certificate holders on a first-come, first-served basis.

The present rent supplement program bears some similarities to this suggested program, but has several critical features (apart from its recent Congressional curtailment) which make it unlikely to produce any meaningful residential mixing. The program is tied to the government-assisted market-rate 221 (d) (3) program (for moderate-income families); there is, however, no corollary requirement that developers who build with the aid of these government-assisted loan programs also participate in the rent supplement program. Inclusion of low-income families is at the option of the private developer. And in order to induce participation, private developers are given complete discretion in tenant selection, a policy which insures that only the "cream" of the poor will get in. Furthermore, FHA has set no upper limits on the number of rent supplement families which may be included in any one project, with the result that many of these projects (the majority of the first batch to be approved) are using rent supplements for 100 per cent of their units, thus creating low-income concentrations similar to those in public housing projects.

Clearly, existing programs are avoiding the issue of economic and social integration (even though there is a nominal attempt in this direction). Current efforts at least make clear the fact that unless low-income families have the effective buying power and concomitant freedom of choice of their more affluent brethren, and unless ways can be found to guarantee that private landlords will in fact not discriminate against subsidized tenants, government housing programs

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

will produce no significant amount of meaningful heterogeneity. A massive program of rent certificates tied to an equally massive program of low-interest development loans will of course meet with substantial political resistance from those who recognize and oppose this potential for social and economic mix. Yet should such a program be passed, it is fairly automatic and self-sufficient in operation and will not meet the repeated political pressures and battles that the local public authority must face each time it wants to move ahead.

Public vs. Private

One of the most salient political issues currently under discussion in the field of housing and urban development is the question of private sector vs. public sector: to what extent and in what ways can and will the private building industry meet the pressing housing needs of the country's low-income families? It is indisputable that the realities of land and construction costs have made and will continue to make it impossible for the private sector, unaided, to meet the housing needs of this segment of the population. It is also becoming quite evident that provision of low-rent housing through the public sector has a great many fundamental and inherent defects.

It would be fruitless to go into any great detail about the failures of the public housing program. The litany of social, aesthetic, and administrative defects is already widely known and acknowledged. Many of the program's shortcomings might be effectively remedied through some of the newers forms of public housing described earlier. But it seems virtually impossible for the program to live down the reputation it has acquired over three decades. The very words "public housing" are anathema to too many people, including the program's clientele; the words evoke images of massive, ugly projects, located in the most undesirable parts of the city, teeming with problem families, governed by harsh and arbitrary regulations. The legacy of 30 years of failure is that people are simply turned off to the notion of public housing, no matter how creative and subtle the form in which the public subsidy comes wrapped.

Similarly, we are beginning to recognize the failings of the administrative mechanism through which low-rent housing has traditionally been supplied to the city. Many housing experts are questioning the efficacy (and even the good intentions) of the local public housing authority. We are beginning to see that many of our cherished "good government" institutions (such as draft boards, welfare boards, housing authorities), putatively governed by disinterested civic types, above politics and with only the public interest at heart, in fact

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

consist of a quite biased segment of the population, with their own values, class interests, and preconceptions—all of which render them quite unrepresentative of (and possibly unsympathetic to) the clientele and segment of population served by these programs. In short, local public housing authorities (with very few exceptions) have not been aggressive advocates of a vastly expanded and improved low-rent housing program, have not been true spokesmen for the interests of persons in need of better housing. Nor should we have expected this: although systematic data are not available as of this writing (the author is currently making a survey of the local housing authority commissioners), it is generally known that local housing authorities are governed by boards that are overwhelmingly white (whereas over half of all families in public housing are Negro); upper income (persons in the $10,000 and up income range); heavily weighted toward business, real estate, insurance, and other occupations that suggest an inherently conservative outlook. In many communities these boards act as a restraint and control on the number, type, and location of low-rent housing developments. Because of who these people are and to whom they owe allegiances, it should not be surprising that they have not been a force pushing for more low-rent housing. In Boston, for example, a city where 20-25 per cent of the population lives in sub-standard housing, not a single unit of family public housing has been constructed in 13 years. Further, there seem to be few, if any, forces in the community that are assuming the advocate role which the local housing authority has abjured.

The local housing authority also builds crucial geographic limitations and distortions into any program for housing reform. With few exceptions, the jurisdiction of these authorities is confined to a single municipality. The clearly metropolitan character of housing problems and housing markets thereby finds no corresponding administrative mechanism for dealing with these issues. The most rational approach to providing decent housing will often involve use of outlying vacant sites and dispersal of families throughout a metropolitan area; yet at present planning and control must stop at the municipal boundary. A study commission of the Illinois legislature has just submitted a remarkable recommendation for abolition of local housing authorities in favor of metropolitan and regional authorities and programs, yet the plan is given virtually no chance of passage, due to the complex vested interests in the present, fragmented structure. Since the federal low-rent housing program has traditionally and painstakingly allowed for maximum local autonomy and discretion, there seems little hope of restructuring the present system of local housing authorities. Rather,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ways must be found to bypass what has become an administrative roadblock.

It is in large part due to above-mentioned shortcomings that proposals have evolved for "unleashing the private sector," bringing the profit motive back into the low-rent housing field. The argument is based on the need for increased activity and motivation; on the private sector's freedom to maneuver and reduce red-tape and political constraints; on the potential that American corporative know-how offers for innovation in the production and marketing of housing.

There is unquestionably a severe shortage of expertise in the housing field, and a large part—if not most—of the technical capabilities regarding all phases of residential development is to be found in the private sector. This expertise refers to questions of financing, land acquisition, legal procedures, design and construction and management. In a field as complex as real estate development, which involves so many resources—financial, human, and technical—delay and inefficiency become exceedingly costly. The paucity of entrepreneurial talent in the public or quasi-public sector has been amply illustrated in the difficulties which nonprofit organizations have experienced in developing housing under several current government programs. Any program of housing subsidization that can make maximum use of existing talents in the private sector will clearly be that much better.

What is needed is a government agency with the power to operate over an entire metropolitan housing market area, which will give private developers—operating on a limited-profit basis—maximum freedom to use their talents within the broad program and planning objectives established by public policy. The new rent supplement and moderate income FHA Sec. 221 (d) (3) programs, which were designed to circumvent the local housing bureaucracy in favor of direct negotiation between FHA and the private developer, offer a form of controlled freedom that, with some changes, would seem to be amenable to private developers and at the same time capable of meeting desired policy objectives. The stipulation of limited profit (which, in fact, with entrepreneurial slight of hand, turns out to be considerably above the presumed 6 per cent maximum) will not be a significant deterrent to the private developer—if unnecessary red tape is eliminated, if a built-in market is assured (through some form of rent supplement or rent certificate program), and if the system provides rewards for demonstrated ability to produce (in the form of lowered initial capital requirements, for example).

Adherence to a general set of public policy controls would become

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

a *quid pro quo* for receipt of government aids, in the form of low-interest loans and land acquisition assistance. Public controls must relate to site selection (to encourage and insure metropolitan planning and solutions), and to adequate protection of the interests of those moderate- and low-income families who can secure decent housing only through government assistance. Specifically, the public agency must insure that an ample number of low- and moderate-income families will be accepted as tenants (and as owners—for there is no reason why outright ownership, cooperatives and condominiums should not be included as options under programs of public subsidization), and that they are being accepted and retained in a non-discriminatory way (*i.e.*, without prejudice as to race, welfare status, family composition, and other social criteria).

It should be recognized, however, that part of the motive underlying this move toward the private sector is traceable to some very unrealistic notions regarding the comparative costs involved in public vs. private production of housing. In many persons' minds—back or front—lies the notion that if the private sector can be induced to do the job, this will reduce the need for public funds. Most of the recent private-sector approaches to the housing problem in fact obfuscate the cost issue by underestimating the quantity of public subsidy needed or by offering a deceptive picture of which income groups will be aided by these programs. Thus, Sen. Kennedy's much heralded plan for Bedford-Stuyvesant envisions producing housing that rents for $85-90 per month. Even using the rule of thumb that families should pay no more than 25 per cent of their income for rent, these rent levels would require an annual income in excess of $4000 (in excess of $5000, if one uses the traditional 20 per cent ratio). There are literally millions of families in the country who are unable to afford these rents. One basic fact must be understood, then, in the public/private debate: there is no magic to be achieved— existing income levels and the costs of providing sound housing are "givens" (with little immediate alteration to be expected from programs of job creation and cost-reducing technological innovations in the building industry). If all families are to be housed decently (a National Goal set by Congress that will soon have its twentieth anniversary), the gap between these two "givens" must be bridged, and it must be bridged by government subsidies. No amount of "plans" for the private sector, however ingenious, is going to alter that basic fact. It is axiomatic that if incentives are made sufficiently attractive, the private sector will produce. The infamous FHA Sec. 608 program of the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

postwar period made this abundantly clear, at the cost of great amounts of jerry-built housing and much bilking of the public. Maximizing profit opportunities can only lead to increased housing costs (and hence to increased public subsidies) and to irresponsible development. The private sector can and should have a crucial role in an expanded government housing program, but only if it is willing to accept moderate profits and to adhere to necessary public controls.

Finally, we must refer to the issue of popular participation and control—that is, who makes and carries out decisions regarding housing programs and conditions for low- and moderate-income families. This issue ranges from broad questions of participation in the planning process to more specific issues regarding changing concepts in the landlord-tenant relationship. There are few areas where it is more imperative to have active and ongoing participation of the prospective clientele than in the area of housing and neighborhood planning. Clearly, questions of preference, life-style, patterns of spatial usage are all crucial to the proper planning of residential areas. Yet there has been a traditional gap between the purveyors and users of housing programs for lower-income groups. There is hardly a housing authority in the country, for example, that includes on its board a resident of a public housing project or a person eligible for residency there. It should not be a matter of great wonder that public housing projects stand as a monument to the insensitivity of program designers to the needs and satisfactions of the program's clientele. The newer, private-enterprise approaches to community development similarly overlook the issue of popular participation and control, or fail to realize the implications of the concept. Thus, Robert Kennedy's two-pronged plan for Bedford-Stuyvesant envisions an indigenous community corporation which is to assert effective control over housing and community facilities planning, plus a "blue-ribbon" board (on which sit men like C. Douglas Dillon and Thomas Watson of IBM) responsible for bringing in the industrial base which will support the community's economic renascence. The Kennedy Plan speaks of the necessity for the community to "create the conditions" under which private corporations and lending institutions will be willing to locate in Bedford-Stuyvesant. Yet there almost certainly will be conflict and contradiction between the set of preconditions demanded by the private sector and the wishes of the local community. If the economic basis of the Bedford-Stuyvesant Plan depends on satisfaction of the investment conditions set forth by the private sector, it is clear that one can speak of meaningful citizen control in only the most limited sense. The new

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Model Cities approach, which arose out of experience under the urban renewal program, likewise lays great stress on "citizen participation." Yet in only very few places is there the possibility that this will mean true control—the right ultimately to approve or disapprove locally any plan for the area, backed up by a commitment of funds to permit a democratically selected local decision-making body to retain its own professional planning staff to assist in the evaluation of official agency plans and the development of alternative plans.

One of the more advanced notions in true popular control of development programs is the community foundation, a combined governing body and development corporation, to which all local residents would belong. This corporation, or foundation, is responsible for the administration of government programs for community development and would build up the economic strength of the area by bringing in new employment opportunities and increasing local ownership of housing, stores and other economic assets. The idea, originally developed by Milton Kotler of the Institute for Policy Studies in Washington, is getting its field test in an area of Columbus, Ohio, and was warmly received and well publicized during the 1966 session of the Ribicoff hearings. If the community corporation, or some variant thereof, became developer of new and rehabilitated housing in the area, hiring professional contractors and making maximum use of employment opportunities for local residents, the proper sensitivity to residents' needs and desires would be structured into government programs of housing subsidization.

The importance of housing and housing programs now encompasses far more than the traditional realms of health and safety, those basic considerations which so strongly motivated the slum fighters of an earlier generation. Dangers to physical well-being are still a notable part of slum living (ranging from rat bites, fires, and household accidents to certain housing-related diseases such as dysentary and skin ailments). But the issue has now broadened to include the social conditions under which people live: issues of status and dignity; the relation of design to behavior; control over the decisions that affect one's life and over one's own living conditions; location and character of community facilities; real choice with regard to residential location and housing type and a host of other considerations that have not traditionally been defined as "housing" issues *per se*. Any housing program for the 1960's must involve more than a bricks-and-mortar approach, must be prepared to deal with the entire set of living variables that make up residential and community life.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Harry Caudill

APPALACHIA: THE DISMAL LAND

In the fall of 1963 Homer Bigart came to eastern Kentucky and wrote an article for the *New York Times* that described the ragged, undernourished people with whom he talked, and the flimsy shacks in which they lived. He told of children so hungry they ate dry mud gouged out between chimney stones. An image-conscious President had issued an executive order creating PARC, the President's Appalachian Regional Commission. In due time the commission made its report to President Johnson and to Congress, and in 1964 its recommendations became law. Most Americans now comfortably assume that the problems of Appalachia have been fairly faced and are well on the road to being solved. Nothing could be farther from the truth.

A great deal of superficial writing has given the nation a one-sided and misleading picture of the Appalachian South. The television camera has emphasized time and again that the Appalachian mountaineers are poor, that their land is tilted on its edge and badly eroded, and that the chief industry of the region—coal mining—is in the doldrums. They have told us that the people are undereducated, suspicious, and poorly motivated.

All this is true, after a fashion. Appalachia is a rugged land. Its once great timber stands have been reduced to pathetic remnants. Most highlanders still entertain a tenacious suspicion of government and of strangers, and out of this ancient suspicion flow many of the ills that beset the region today.

Mountaineers have traditionally looked at government as a dangerous tyrant, albeit a tyrant of the people's own creation. They have feared that if government is made strong enough to be effective it will be strong enough to enslave them. As a result the Appalachian states and people have deliberately kept their governments weak—and weak, underfinanced governments have kept the people ignorant and, in their ignorance, poor.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

II

Let us look, for example, at eastern Kentucky, the region brought most often to the attention of the nation. Here we have a territory the size of Switzerland. Like Switzerland, it is mountainous. Both regions embrace about 15,000 square miles. Each is scenically beautiful. Each contains extensive brine beds. But here the comparison ends. Switzerland is almost certainly the richest region in the world. Some 5.5 million Swiss live in their little corner on the housetop of Europe. Their banks are immense. The Swiss taxpayers support 22 great institutions of higher learning, including seven world-famous universities and five great medical colleges. The little republic is so desirable a place to live in that it has to enforce the world's strictest emigration laws.

The Swiss earth, by contrast, is remarkably poor; 24 per cent of the surface is barren and incapable of growing anything; about one-fourth will grow timber, though the varieties are exceedingly limited. Very little of the country is warm enough for really good crops. Yet, the Swiss have become a remarkably rich, strong, and self-reliant people, despite their poor land.

We, in eastern Kentucky, proceeding in the usual Appalachian fashion, have done precisely the opposite, though the Kentucky mountains are superbly rich in minerals. Originally, the coal fields contained some 35 billion tons of coal; approximately 32 billion tons remain under the hills. There are important deposits of high-grade petroleum, beds of natural gas, and immense strata of limestone and silica-rich sandstone.

The surface of this eastern Kentucky mountain earth is also abundantly endowed. It is rich in timber types and has more strains of oak than there are timber trees of all varieties in Europe. It is blessed with 45 inches of rainfall annually and has no barren land. There is probably not an acre of land in eastern Kentucky that, in its natural state, cannot grow something of utility and beauty.

But the Swiss miracle has not been repeated in Kentucky. The Swiss had confidence in their government and used it as a beneficial tool. They created an equitable tax system and collected the adequate revenues which are the lifeblood of civilization. They built schools, libraries, universities, and hospitals, and these institutions enriched the people in a creative, upward-moving spiral.

Our Kentuckians followed another road. We did not levy such taxes. We did not build the schools, libraries, universities, and hospitals. We neglected the one great resource that overshadows and outweighs all others in importance—the people. Consequently, we are a people in

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

flight. Hundreds of thousands of mountaineers have moved away. While Switzerland fences people out, Appalachia sustains the greatest out-migration since the Irish exodus of the nineteenth century. In fact, central Appalachia is threatened with virtually complete depopulation within another decade or two unless we find a way to stop the present ruinous process.

By comparison with Switzerland's 5.5 million, there are only 800,000 people left in eastern Kentucky. Its counties operate 40 per cent of the nation's remaining one-room schools. One quarter of the white adults are functional illiterates. Its rainfall, shed on denuded hillsides and unchecked by dams, rushes away in ever more frequent floods. Thus water—one of the region's great assets—has become its scourge.

We and our forebears had an opportunity to build a vigorous society, but we have opted for a low-key society instead, a society that places little emphasis on human development—on skills, competence, and inquisitiveness—and the result has been the enlargement of incompetence and dependency. A quarter of the dwindling population is on public assistance. Like most of the Appalachian South, the region has been turned into a paleface reservation.

Sadly, the experience of Kentucky's eastern counties is in no sense unique. Its failure may have been greater in some respects than those of its kindred regions—southwestern Virginia, West Virginia, eastern Tennessee, western Maryland, and southern Pennsylvania; but in the main its tragic tale has been repeated: a backwoods people has moved into a primordial forest. They began decimating their timber to obtain "new grounds" which they wore out without replenishing them with cover crops. Failing to educate their descendants, the generations perpetuated a lack of understanding of the land and its capacities. When the region was rediscovered after the Civil War the people practically gave away its great riches, effectually disinheriting their children and their children's children. Some of the mineral tracts sold for as little as 10¢ an acre. The vast natural wealth passed into the hands of land companies organized by speculators with offices in Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, New York, and Baltimore.

For more than 50 years mountaineers have sat supinely and quietly by and allowed their land, kinsmen, and institutions to be exploited by people who have neither affection nor respect for Appalachia—whose only concern is to plunder it.

The hidden face of Appalachia must be brought into view and seen in proper focus. It is wondrously prosperous, for the coal depression has long since passed into history. It is studded with the names of

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

great corporations—United States Steel, Bethlehem Steel, Inland Steel, Republic Steel, International Harvester, Jones & Laughlin, Ford Motor Company, and scores of others. And there are less famous corporations, the obscure firms that own immense tracts of mineral-rich land and lease them to operating companies for royalties payable on coal, oil, gas, and limestone. There is, for example, Virginia Coal & Iron with its 206,000 acres, almost certainly the most profitable investor-owned corporation in the United States. A few years ago the president of that company told a reporter for *Dunn's Review and Modern Industry* that he managed to "carry practically all of Virginia Coal & Iron's income down to net." Of its receipts 76 per cent are tax-free at the federal level. In that year the company realized a net profit after taxes of 61 per cent of gross. It paid a dividend of 45 per cent of gross, nine times as high as that paid by General Motors.

The Kentucky River Coal Corporation owns 200,000 acres in eastern Kentucky, and during that same year its dividend was a trifle under half of its huge income.

The Big Sandy Corporation, with 75,000 acres in the fabulously rich Big Sandy region, is dominated by the Delano family and has its headquarters at Campo Bello. It has supported its investors in fine style for more than half a century.

These companies and a score of others like them have shaped the destiny of Appalachia for 75 years. They have set the policies followed in its courthouses and state houses, and governors and legislators have cowered before them, enacting laws that exempted them almost entirely from any effective taxation.

Consequently, Appalachia's counties are hollow shells, resting lightly on an enormously rich natural-resource foundation. In these once—and sometimes still—lovely valleys, whose scenic beauty should be worth fortunes to their inhabitants, the poor little counties huddle—shabby, starved for funds, in debt, deep in perpetual fiscal crisis. The shoddy schools and other public facilities frighten away potential investors. From their dreary ineffectiveness the more able, intelligent, and ambitious flee.

Appalachia is saddled with a colonial system. The colonial system was strapped onto Appalachia during the same historic interval when it was imposed on much of the world. The colonialists went to Japan and China with gun boats and compelled these nations to trade. They "freed" Cuba and then ruled it through puppet governments for two generations.

They carved up Africa as hungry children might slice a pie. They con-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

temptuously laced the countries of Latin America into economic strait jackets and then scornfully dismissed their victims as "banana republics" and "coffee empires." But in these "backward" or "underdeveloped" countries the anti-colonialists have been at work with much courage and zeal, and the once viselike grip of the absentee overlords has been shattered. The colonialist exploiters have been turned out and the people, by one means or another, have taken up the powers and responsibilities of governments. They have, in effect, seized control of their own destinies. They are doing many foolish things in the name of self-government, but rarely with such foolishness or greed as their colonialist predecessors.

The colonialist sway in the rest of the world has ended. Only in our Appalachia does it proceed unchecked. In Tennessee, in my own Kentucky, in West Virginia, western Virginia, western Maryland, and Pennsylvania the colonial bastions erected in the 1870's, 1880's and 1890's, and early in this century still stand. Once those same companies and their associates and minions dominated Africa, South America, and Asia. Now their benighted policies, rejected so firmly elsewhere, continue in effect and force only in the Appalachian South. And there too, at last, they are being challenged!

III

If a New Appalachia is to arise out of the present tangle the people must be educated to comprehend the truth about their land. In classrooms, in courthouses, in community action centers, in every place where people meet, the possibility of Appalachian reform must be taught. The first battle ground in the struggle may well be the college classroom, but eventually it will be waged in PTA meetings and in state and local meetings of educational associations.

Teachers and their charges pay a terrible price for our regional backwardness. They would profit immensely from meaningful reform. A severance tax of 10 cents per ton of coal, barrel of oil, and comparable measure of gas would provide $30 million annually for education--for higher salaries, better buildings, enriched curricula. We must educate people:

(a) to be discontented with the present arrangement;
(b) to appreciate the immense wealth of their land;
(c) to resent its exploitation by absentee owners;
(d) to understand the availability of funds to finance the institutions the people need;

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

(e) to grasp the vast power they can exercise--but have long neglected to exercise—over their basic wealth;
(f) to inspire a political movement to accomplish the far-reaching changes I have advocated.

We in the Congress for Appalachian Development have proposed that the people of the Southern mountains, whose forebears pioneered the institutions of freedom at Mecklenburg, South Carolina, and proclaimed America's first Declaration of Independence, should now assert a new Declaration of Independence and of Self-sufficiency; that as Americans we are a free-born people and intend to order our communities and affairs as such.

We seek to accomplish here no more and no less than has been accomplished in rich resource regions elsewhere in the world. We think the great wealth that was pilfered from our ancestors should be returned to the people of the mountains. We ask that those people who now hold legal title should be given a better and fairer deal than was afforded our forebears. The predecessors of the present-day companies came to the mountains when our ancestors were unschooled and inexperienced, and, taking advantage of their credulity, persuaded them to sign "broad form" deeds whereby coal companies in state after state claim the right to wreck and plunder the land, often without compensation to the people who live on and hold title to the "surface estate."

Whereas ignorant people were cozened into virtually giving away their substance, we would compensate these owners fairly according to modern values, vesting many of the great tracts of minerals in public ownership. We would put the title into public corporations, chartered under state enabling laws and governed by representatives of the people. These public corporations would have the right of eminent domain and would be empowered to sell bonds to finance the developmental efforts of their districts. These Economic Development Districts, these public corporation, would go to Wall Street or other money markets and raise their investment funds by offering a sound deal to the investing public. With these funds and by due process of law they would buy much of the vast mineral holdings now controlled by the economic royalists in distant cities.

With these acquisitions the people, acting through their Economic Development Districts, would undertake a comprehensive development program. They would build lakes and dams and coal-burning steam plants. They would turn the abundant resources of fuel and water into electricity and sell it in the world's largest and fastest-growing power market. They would send it by the fast-forming power grid to the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

electricity-hungry cities—including those now suffocating in grime and grit from antiquated generators on their outskirts. After debt retirement, Appalachia would use the profits from the sale of its power to finance the institutions and services the region desperately needs.

It is certain that Appalachian fossil fuels will power much of the nation in the future, as they have done for so long and so consistently in the past. *The coal and water will be turned into electricity, and the electricity will be sold at a profit.* Whether these profits will go out as dividends to distant stockholders or stay behind to finance the institutions our people need so desperately and have been promised for so long, remains to be seen.

This proposal is neither radical nor new. It has been thoroughly tested in the state of Washington over the last 30 years. A single county —Chelan—with a population of 40,000 has sold more than $500 million worth of bonds for its development. It built the Rocky Reach dam at a cost of $273.1 million. The Chelan County Public Utility District paid $1.5 million in taxes and donated another $ million to the county and county seat. The cheap power and good schools are attracting industry, and the county is booming.

The people who designed and now operate that Public Utility District have assured me that if Appalachia's counties were similarly organized they could raise many billions of dollars by the same means and finance local, grass-roots TVAs under the auspices of the states.

IV

The scheme the federal authorities have devised for our highlands is not a development program at all. It is a depopulation program. Some 80 per cent of the money Congress has authorized will go into roads, and these roads will lead to a few strategically located "growth centers," many of them completely outside the hills. The highways will act as efficient conveyors to move the people out of the hinterlands into a few places like Lexington, Kentucky, and Kingsport, Tennessee. There, the theory runs, they will find jobs and happiness.

I have a deeply-rooted suspicion that this undertaking reflects a scheme fostered by the great absentee holding corporations to empty the countryside in order to facilitate their extractive industries. Nothing could suit them better than to empty the long valleys of the Appalachian hinterland, to leave the little houses without inhabitants to witness or protest the destruction of the land. Then our latter-day colonialists could drill and dig and gouge and cut and blast to their heart's content. Then, without interference from troublesome local people, they could

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

get out the minerals by the cheapest, the most technologically efficient method. Their profits would swell accordingly and their dividend rates would soar to new levels. Then, in God's good time, the stripmined landscape and its hideous streams would be sold to the federal government for rehabilitation at the cost of the taxpayers.

Was this kind of a future for Appalachia sold to an unwitting Regional Commission in 1963-64, and to an equally unquestioning Congress? How much better it would be to seize the dream President Johnson and Senators Ribicoff and Kennedy have expressed in recent months when they spoke of new cities springing up across America! They and others have proposed that the United States solve the problems of its people out in the countryside in new cities and towns, rather than in sprawling, crumbling ghettos in gargantuan super cities. They hold that new cities must be built because existing cities cannot expand to absorb all who are destined to crowd into them. And where can we find a more likely spot for new population centers than in our own southern and central Appalachia?

The government of the United States is thinking of spending $100 billion to bring a river down from Alaska to southern California. A trifling part of this money would build scores of dams and lakes across the Appalachian South. This spangle of man-made lakes would provide flood control, industrial water, recreational water, and cheap electricity —all important underpinnings in the creation of a viable economy.

Government and private planners are at work devising the essential understanding for the fostering of new communities. The government is going to encourage them. Industry is going to move into them. Millions of people are going to inhabit them. It has been calculated that $3 trillion worth of new housing will go up in the United States by the beginning of the twenty-first century. Unless we act on the side of progress and positive good we will continue an immense American sub-territory in the hands of ruthless exploiters who live far beyond its borders and care little or nothing about its destiny.

From the L I D

American Power in the Twentieth Century

by Michael Harrington

35c

Order from:

LEAGUE FOR INDUSTRIAL DEMOCRACY
112 East 19 Street, New York, N.Y. 10003

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND DEMOCRACY

A Debate on Some Problems of the "Third World"

1. Dennis H. Wrong

Robert Heilbroner's essay, "Counterrevolutionary America," is the most intelligent and forceful statement of a point of view that is widely held by writers on economic development in the Third World.[1] Although Heilbroner is an economist, his conclusions rest only to a minor degree on economic expertise. Both in the article and in his earlier book-length essay, *The Great Ascent*,[2] he fully recognizes that economic development necessarily involves massive social and political changes in addition to the changes in the techniques and the organization of production that the term connotes in its narrow sense. Heilbroner's argument, anticipated in his earlier book but stated far more strongly and without qualification in the more recent article, is that the obstacles posed to rapid economic development by traditional values and old established ruling elites are so great that a revolution bringing to power a Communist-type totalitarian dictatorship can alone be expected to overcome them and proceed with the urgent task of modernizing backward societies.

It is worth reviewing step by step the reasoning by which Heilbroner reaches this conclusion. The essentials of his position are shared by many other writers—indeed, some of them have become virtual commonplaces in discussions of economic development. By summarizing the argument as schematically as possible, shorn of Heilbroner's considerable eloquence and richness of allusion, it should be possible to see its main structure and to separate the truths from the assumptions and hypotheses contained in it.

Only the starting point of the argument involves an economic proposition: namely, that the task of initial capital accumulation in underdeveloped countries requires the holding down for a time of the

---

1 Robert L. Heilbroner, "Counterrevolutionary America," *Commentary*, Vol. 43 (April 1967), pp. 31–38.

2 Robert L. Heilbroner, *The Great Ascent*, New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1963.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

living standards of the peasants, who constitute the mass of the population; not until the "infra-structure" of a modern economy has been built will it be possible for the resulting gains in productivity to be widely distributed.

But strictly economic considerations are transcended as soon as we ask what groups and agencies in contemporary underdeveloped countries are capable of organizing and directing the economic task of drawing a portion of the peasantry off the land to build capital, and of collecting part of the agricultural produce of the remaining peasants to feed this new nonagricultural labor force. The absence of rising commercial and entrepreneurial classes resembling the European *bourgeoisie*, or of any group imbued with an ethos favoring, like the Protestant ethic, hard work and the sacrifice of present material gains for the future, means that the state alone can play the necessary role in today's backward countries. Most experts on economic development concede (in the large at least) that the state must assume the entrepreneurial function in the majority of the nations of the Third World and that these nations are therefore likely to adopt some form of collectivism or "state socialism." Only a handful of neoclassical economists disagree. The state must be a strong state if it is to initiate successful programs of economic development. That is, it must, in the first instance, possess the power and the will to coerce or buy off traditional elites that resist modernizing measures. But, more important, it must command the allegiance of a significant portion of the population.

II

There is little in this analysis so far that is likely to arouse much disagreement. The next step in Heilbroner's argument, however, goes beyond the limits of general consensus. In order to win the support of the masses, the argument runs, the state must promote a new ideological creed that will penetrate their minds and hearts, win them away from traditional habits, beliefs and loyalties—"reach and rally them," as he puts it—and induce them to acquiesce in the sacrifices and rigors of the period of capital accumulation. Such a creed is bound to be intolerant of all dissent and is likely to contain a strong negative component, branding foreigners, in particular the West, as carriers of evil and as actual or potential supporters of oppositionists at home. Clearly, this description is matched most closely by a revolutionary regime which has seized power after mobilizing a sizable segment of the population against the old order or foreign imperialists, or, most probably, a combination of both. Only a militant revolutionary state can make the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

sharp break with the past and impose the strict totalitarian discipline on a sprawling agrarian society that are needed to begin "the Great Ascent" to the heights of modernization.

Heilbroner's rejection of the belief or hope that democratic, constitutional governments, preserving and fostering the political liberties of the individual citizen, are capable of achieving economic development is presented in less detail than his reasons for thinking that some form of totalitarian collectivism can do the job. But his case against democratic government is implicit in much of his argument and has been more fully stated by other writers who share his general outlook. I shall draw on some of them to flesh out his thesis.[3]

Most of the states in the Third World are far from being genuine nations. Democratic institutions and practices, it is held, can only delay the task of nation-building by encouraging all the diverse ethnic, religious, tribal, and linguistic groups that make up the populations of the new states to articulate their distinctive values and interests. The new states must create an overriding sense of national purpose and identity transcending parochial group loyalties if they are to carry out effective economic development programs. A democratic multiparty system will perpetuate and even accentuate the fragmentation of their populations. This argument has been applied most widely in defense of one-party dictatorships in Africa. It makes a specifically *political* case against democracy in the Third World, seeing nation-building as the prime requisite for the strong state that is in turn a prime requisite for economic development.

Unlike Africa, most Asian and Latin-American nations do not confront the immediate necessity of welding together collections of tribal peoples who have often been traditional enemies and have never acknowledged any central political authority. The case against democracy in Asia and Latin America rests less on the alleged requirements of nation-building than on the contention that democratic governments cannot succeed in breaking the resistance to far-reaching social reform offered by old classes and elites—parasitic landlords, village moneylenders, *compradore* merchants, corrupt military and bureaucratic cliques, hoary priestly oligarchies. Democracy is likely to be no more than a facade behind which these groups retain full power, occasionally lulling the masses with token reforms.

A more general argument against democracy in the Third World,

[3] For a critique resembling in some respects the present one of prevalent assumptions about modernization in the Third World, see Charles C. Moskos, Jr., and Wendell Bell, "Emerging Nations and Ideologies of American Social Scientists," *The American Sociologist*, Vol. 2 (May 1967), pp. 67–72.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

one that is more closely linked to the initial prerequisites for economic development, holds that the masses are likely to vote themselves welfare state benefits, opting for immediate improvements in their standard of living rather than for capital investment and thus defeating long-range development programs. Argentina under Peron, and particularly the persistence of Peronist sympathies among the industrial workers long after the dictator's fall from power, are frequently cited as the standard horrible example.[4] There is an obvious contradiction between the assertion that democracy in the Third World is doomed to be a mere facade manipulated by the traditional ruling classes and the expressed fear that it will result in the mass electorate voting for immediate, "uneconomic" gains in income; but we shall let this pass for the moment.

Such in broad outline is Heilbroner's thesis, omitting only his observations on the probable attitude of the United States to revolutionary regimes in the Third World, which I shall discuss very briefly later. The thesis, both in Heilbroner's and other versions, has evoked vigorous objections from liberals and democrats unwilling to accept the necessity and inevitability of the totalitarian trend it postulates. Their reactions, however, have usually failed to go beyond ringing reaffirmations of democratic and humanitarian values, and expressions of moral outrage at the apparent readiness of so many Western writers to regard violence and repressive government as the unavoidable price of modernization. Heilbroner is entitled to reply to such protests—indeed, he has already so replied (see the correspondence columns of the July *Commentary*[5])—"don't blame me for being the bearer of bad news. To refute me you must first show that the news is not as bad as I've reported, that my analysis is mistaken, and this you have failed to do."

III

The Heilbroner thesis outlines certain social prerequisites for economic development and maintains that democratic institutions are bound to present obstacles to fulfilling them. Since democracy runs the risk of promoting anarchic factionalism, permitting privileged classes to retain covert control over the government, and encouraging all groups to seek to use the state to advance their material interests, the thesis possesses an immediate plausibility. This plausibility carries over to the next step in the argument, where it is asserted that a government lacking democratic features will be able to avoid the problems of democracy and meet the requirements of modernization. But what if

[4] Heilbroner, *The Great Ascent*, p. 100.
[5] *Commentary*, Vol. 43 (July 1967), pp. 18–20.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

we start by asking what are the difficulties that a totalitarian revolutionary regime is likely to face in carrying out development programs? These difficulties are conceded in passing by Heilbroner, but they fail to receive the attention they deserve because of the initial critical focus on the difficulties apt to be encountered by "mild," democratic governments.

To begin with, the inflammatory nationalism, the xenophobia, and the exaltation of the state—which are, according to Heilbroner, invariable ingredients of the "mobilizing appeal" of revolutionary elites—lead to the investment of considerable resources in armaments and the maintenance of large standing armies. Such expenditures are, of course, an utter waste from the standpoint of economic development. If demonstration steel mills and airlines are to be regarded as economically irrational national status symbols, how much more so are jet planes, tanks, and well-drilled armies? True, the desire for national strength and military glory may powerfully motivate a nation to modernize its capital equipment and thus lay the foundation for eventual increases in productivity that will wipe out mass poverty and improve every citizen's material lot. A nation that can send sputniks into outer space is presumably capable of mass-producing shoes and automobiles, although the Soviet Union has yet to confirm this. However, underdeveloped nations are more likely to purchase the sinews of war from the advanced nations by intensifying their production of staple raw materials—the very condition that is part of the whole syndrome of their economic backwardness. Moreover, the trouble with large defense expenditures is that they tend to become self-perpetuating, not merely because they create vested interests, but because they persuade insecure neighbors to arm themselves and thus make the claim that a large military establishment is necessary for national security. Surely, those nations that have followed most closely Heilbroner's prescription—Russia, China, Egypt, Sukarno's Indonesia—have diverted enormous human and material resources from peaceful economic development to military uses.

In addition, the enhanced importance of the army makes a military take-over more probable should the revolutionary regime falter. If any "wave of the future" is discernible in the Third World at the present moment, it is in the direction of military dictatorships rather than Communist revolutions. Since 1960 revolutionary national socialist or left-nationalist reformist regimes have been overthrown in Argentina, Brazil, Bolivia, Algeria, Ghana, and Indonesia, and have been discredited —to put it mildly—in Egypt and Syria. It is still altogether possible that in China, Mao's "cultural revolution" will be terminated by an army

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

take-over. Military dictatorships have also replaced shaky democratic civilian governments in Nigeria, the Congo, Greece, and a number of smaller African nations. A few of these new regimes are national socialist and even pro-Communist in ideological orientation (e.g. Algeria); a larger number are right-wing, strongly anti-Communist or even proto-fascist (e.g. Argentina, Brazil, Greece, Indonesia).

Finally, aggressive nationalism and militarism may induce nations to seek territorial expansion, causing wars that risk spreading to engulf entire subcontinents, if not the world. Barrington Moore, Jr., observes that military defeat in World War II was part of the price paid by Japan for following a conservative-fascist path to modernization.[6] In other words, the dead of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the Tokyo fire-bomb raids, and the Pacific islands campaigns must be cast into the balance against the "preventable deaths" from starvation and injustice under the old regime in toting up the costs of Japanese modernization.[7] Should not the Soviet Union's enormous losses in World War II be assessed, along with the victims of Stalin's purges and enforced collectivizations, as part of the price of totalitarian Communist modernization? Stalin's army purges, his opportunistic foreign policy toward Germany, and his unpopularity with the peasants who first hailed the Nazi invaders as liberators, stemmed from his totalitarian rule and contributed to Russian military defeats in the early stages of the war.

Some Western nations also went through a military-expansionist phase in the course of their modernization. But in the present century technology has made even "conventional" warfare far more destructive than in the past. If, as Heilbroner argues, greater population growth and density make economic development more urgent in the Third World today than in the West in the last century, then the changed scale of warfare and a more unstable international environment should also be taken into account if militaristic regimes are to be recommended as arch modernizers.

What countries have achieved economic development to date as a result of nationalist-communist revolutions? Let us concede the case of the Soviet Union, although the entire issue of whether the Bolshevik October revolution as distinct from the February revolution, let alone Stalin's totalitarian rule, was necessary for Russian economic development remains highly debatable among economists and historians.

---

[6] Barrington Moore, Jr., *The Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*, Boston: The Beacon Press, 1966, p. 271.

[7] *Ibid.*, p. 104; Heilbroner, "Counterrevolutionary America," p. 34.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Heilbroner tells us that for himself he would rather be "an anonymous peasant" in China or Cuba than in India, Peru, or Ecuador.[8] But by his own admission "it may well be that Cuba has suffered a considerable economic decline" since Castro took power, and "we may not know for many years whether the Chinese peasant is better or worse off than before the revolution."[9] He praises Cuba for its educational effort, and China for having freed its youth from the bondage of the traditional family system. However, these achievements—assuming their reality—at most facilitate economic development rather than constituting development itself. Heilbroner might also reflect that the peasants of India and Peru evidently do not share his view of their prospects, having rejected in large numbers the opportunity to vote for Communist parties in free elections. In short, with the ambiguous exception of the Soviet Union, the Communist promise of rapid industrialization remains no more than a promise.

IV

Heilbroner's case for the necessity of totalitarian ruthlessness to achieve modernization rests ultimately on his conviction of the enormous urgency of the problems of the backward countries. They cannot proceed according to the more leisurely timetable of past Western industrialization; they must take a giant step forward within the next three or four decades or mass famine and internal chaos are sure to be their fate. Essentially, Heilbroner sees the continuing population explosion as imposing the need for an all-out attack on backwardness which must have priority over other values and objectives. Not the entire Third World, but "primarily the crowded land masses and archipelagos of Southeast Asia and the impoverished areas of Central and South America" must look to revolutions led by modernizing elites to rescue them from deepening poverty. The extent to which Heilbroner's argument rests on the population explosion is striking, considering that, though there are many exceptions, economists as a rule are more optimistic than demographers in their estimates of the prospects for economic development in backward countries. Economists perceive the economic job to be done and are impressed by the ample technical resources—including their own counsel—available to do it, while demographers, horrified by the floods of additional people indicated by extrapolated population growth rates, insist that without birth control any development program is doomed to founder.

---

[8] Heilbroner in *Commentary*, Vol. 43 (July 1967), p. 20.
[9] Heilbroner, "Counterrevolutionary America," p. 32.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

But are Communist countries likely to check population growth? Heilbroner refers patronizingly to India's failure to control the birth rate, but there is not the slightest evidence that China has had any greater success. Indeed, China's leaders lag behind India's in their awareness of the need for an anti-natalist population policy. The relatively sparsely-settled Soviet Union never faced a population explosion comparable to that of Southeast Asia—a further reason, incidentally, for questioning the necessity of totalitarianism for Russian economic development. The doctrinal anti-Malthusianism of Communist ideology imposes a special handicap on Communist countries with regard to birth control. Nor do non-Communist revolutionary elites imbued with aggressive nationalism and anti-Western fervor seem promising candidates to assign high priority to diffusing family planning over building steel mills and armies.

But what if birth rates should turn downwards *before* the "take-off" point in economic development has been reached? In a recent article in *Public Interest*,[10] Donald Bogue, the University of Chicago demographer, departed from the conventional pessimism of his colleagues,[11] to predict the imminent end of the population explosion in the Third World. There is good reason to believe, he insists, that by the end of the present decade the efforts of government and private agencies promoting family planning will at last pay off and birth rates in India and several other Asian countries will begin unmistakably to decline. Bogue is unable to present decisive evidence supporting his forecast—he claims that the "catching on" of new birth control methods in peasant populations is still too recent to have been statistically recorded. His main tangible evidence is based on studies in several countries, the most impressive of which was conducted in South Korea, showing that peasant women have in surprising numbers adopted in an exceedingly short space of time such recently developed contraceptive methods as intra-uterine devices and even pills. Maybe Bogue will turn out to be a false prophet, but it is worth recalling that sharp reversals of demographic trends have happened simultaneously before in a number of quite different countries, so there is no reason why sudden mass adoption of family planning resulting in lower birth rate might not occur in large areas of the Third World. Writing about Latin America, another demographer, J. Mayone Stycos of Cornell,

---

10 Donald Bogue, "The End of the Population Explosion," *Public Interest*, Vol. 2 (Spring 1967), pp. 11–20.

11 Including myself. See, for example, Dennis H. Wrong, "Population Myths," *Commentary*, Vol. 43 (November 1964), pp. 61–64.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

also expresses cautious optimism in a recent book reporting his research in Peru and several Caribbean nations.[12]

V

I have argued that, though the difficulties faced by democratic governments in carrying out economic development are real ones, totalitarian revolutionary regimes also face difficulties peculiar to them that Heilbroner and others tend to slight. Military dictatorships, a third and at present the most common type of regime in the Third World, have not been notoriously successful modernizers either.[13] One might conclude in an even more pessimistic vein than Heilbroner that neither democracy, revolutionary collectivism, nor military rule are capable of achieving modernization and that it is therefore unlikely to take place at all. Yet such a conclusion would clearly be unjustified. In the past there have been a variety of paths to modernization: it has been achieved by essentially conservative regimes in Germany and Japan, by postrevolutionary bourgeois democracies in England and France, under a pure bourgeois democracy in the United States, and by Communist dictatorship in Russia; even a few military regimes have made considerable progress as in Turkey and Mexico. There is apparently no intrinsic connection at all between economic progress and formal political institutions. The pace of economic development has also varied greatly, particularly among smaller nations free from the tensions of international rivalry.

Democratic institutions such as parliamentary government, elementary civil liberties and the rule of law, though not—except in the United States—universal suffrage, preceded economic development in the Western bourgeois democracies. Why should it be so widely assumed that democracy can only emerge in the Third World after modernization has been carried out by authoritarian governments? Those who argue this confuse the *strong* state that is indeed required for economic development with a monolithic, authoritarian state. The sceptics about democracy, with all their talk of avoiding ethnocentric evaluations of the institutions of non-Western people, often project the experience of Western democracies into the different social context of backward societies when they contend that Asian and African electorates will use the ballot to advance their short-term interests like voters in the West accustomed to government whose rationalized welfare and service

12 J. Mayone Stycos, *Population Control in Latin America*, Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1967.

13 See William McCord, "Armies and Politics: A Problem in the Third World," DISSENT, Vol. 14 (July–August 1967), pp. 444–452.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

functions have succeeded, as Michael Walzer has argued, in de-mystifying the very idea of the state itself. Actually, the demands of the masses in underdeveloped areas are likely to be too modest rather than excessive from the standpoint of stimulating development.[14] Democracy, moreover, may take many different forms: ancient village communal bodies like the old Russian *mir* and the Indian *panchayats* can serve as two-way communication channels between modernizing elites and the base of the social structure, giving rise to a kind of "democratic centralism" that is a reality rather than a facade for unilateral dictation by the leadership. Also, even after universal suffrage was in effect in the Western democracies, the political organization and mobilization of the lower classes was a long, slow process. The masses in the Third World are not going to leap at once into the political arena to make short-sighted and selfish immediate group demands. There is no reason why they cannot be trusted to accept the guidance of enlightened modernizing elites that truly consult them and give them a sense of participation in the process. It is precisely such a sense of participation that Heilbroner sees as the *forte* of Communist revolutionaries, but there is no inherent reason why they alone should be capable of instilling it.

What about American policy toward the Third World? Although a secondary issue, this was ostensibly the main subject of Heilbroner's essay. Heilbroner's denial notwithstanding, the United States has not been consistently anti-revolutionary nor indeed consistently anything except opposed to states that have directly aligned themselves politically and militarily with the Soviet Union or China. The United States has given aid to Communist Yugoslavia; to nationalist, pro-Communist and anti-American states such as Ghana under Nkrumah, Algeria, and Egypt; as well as to non-Communist revolutionary regimes such as Bolivia in the 1950's. Admittedly, the bulk of American aid has gone to such "client states" ruled by conservative dictatorships as South Korea, Taiwan, and South Vietnam. But American policy has on the whole been shortsightedly opportunistic rather than ideologically consistent, willing to support almost any government, Left or Right, that is not a direct dependency of Russia or China. When Heilbroner suggests that the United States is unlikely to allow any nations in the Third World to remain neutral in the Cold War,[15] he seems to be taking seriously Dulles's rhetoric of a decade ago—even then the rhetoric did not correspond to American practice. More probably, he has

[14] Moskos and Bell, *op. cit.*, p. 69.
[15] Heilbroner in *Commentary*, Vol. 43 (July 1967), p. 20.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

in mind the war in Vietnam, but the flimsy American justification for the war rests on the assumption that China is the "real" enemy, not the Viet Cong or Hanoi. The United States accepted, after all, a neutral government in Laos.

Latin America, however, is obviously the area where Heilbroner's label "Counterrevolutionary America" is most applicable. Not only do the pocketbook interests of American businessmen have a greater influence on government policy there than elsewhere in the world, but the fall-out in domestic politics of victories by Communist or proto-Communist revolutionaries is bound to be far greater. The Dominican tragedy reveals the panic which may strike an American Administration if it persuades itself that there is even the slightest possibility of a repetition of the Cuban experience. It is indeed hard to imagine the United States passively tolerating *any* anti-American, revolutionary government in this hemisphere.

Finally, let us suppose that American policy-makers accept Heilbroner's analysis and become convinced that modernization of the Third World is possible only under Communist or authoritarian left-nationalist auspices. The results may be curious indeed. *The New Republic* of July 8, 1967, reports that a privately distributed newsletter subscribed to by Wall Street insiders suggests that it may very well be in the American national interest to allow the Third World to go Communist. The United States will save money in economic aid as the new Communist regimes seek development by sweating their own peasantries whose labor will have to carry the whole burden of capital accumulation. If they fail, the United States cannot be blamed. If they succeed, they will in a decade or two become moderate and "bourgeois" in spirit like the Russians and not only can we live in peace with them but we can engage them in mutually profitable trade. Such a view may very well spread among those whom C. Wright Mills once called "sophisticated conservatives," and it may become more influential than the anger and frustration at the failure of American capitalism to convert the world that Heilbroner imputes to our leaders. And, as is so often the case in politics, the diagnosis may become self-confirming if America reduces instead of expands its aid to the Third World in expectation of a wave of totalitarian revolutions. The Heilbroner thesis might thus ironically help bring about the conditions it claims to deplore in counseling us to resign ourselves to their inevitability.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

2. Robert L. Heilbroner Replies

I am grateful to Dennis Wrong for his thoughtful and carefully argued reply to my article in *Commentary* and to *The Great Ascent*. Here and there I disagree with him on small points, most of which will emerge in the paragraphs below. But in the main I feel that somehow even Wrong, who so scrupulously avoids the rhetoric of outrage, has failed to come squarely to grips with the contentions on which my own point of view is based. Let me therefore attempt to answer him by restating my position and emphasizing where I think the issue lies between us.

I. The essential starting point must be whether or not one believes that modernization will take place under the aegis of *present* governments in most of Latin America, Southeast Asia, and the Near East.[1] I have made it clear that I do not think it will. What is more, I rather doubt that Wrong would disagree with this pessimistic appraisal, although he would no doubt wish to see it qualified. If this is so, then economic development will have to wait until the regimes that now seem incapable of mounting a successful modernization program are replaced by other regimes. The question is, what kinds will they be?

II. Are the chances propitious for the emergence of democratic governments as the modernizing forces in these areas? I do not think so for the following reasons, some mentioned by Wrong and some not:

1. In many states only a revolutionary party will be able to oust the incumbent regimes.

2. In most nations the tradition of democratic opposition is unknown or thinly held, and the tradition of "strong man" government very widely accepted.

3. The changes needed to bring modernization are not only political, but economic, social, intellectual, and even religious. Such deep-seated changes are extraordinarily difficult to achieve under the best of circumstances. I suspect that only authoritarian regimes can impose them.[2]

---

1 I omit the Western and Eastern parts of Africa, where the problems of nation-building are now all-important. Nation-building can occur under many kinds of regimes.

2 And they will be *imposed*. Modernization is a kind of cultural imperialism that is forced upon the masses. Hence it means little to claim, no doubt correctly, that the peasants do not like Communists. They will not like any zealous modernizers. And no other kind will succeed.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Against these doubts Wrong suggests some counterarguments. One of these is that "democracy" is capable of many guises. This is certainly true and some measure of "democracy" in a *consultative* sense (e.g., the Russian soviets, at least in theory) may exist even under dictatorships. What cannot, I think, be tolerated is a recognized and potentially powerful *opposition party.*

A second counterargument of Wrong's is that the Western nations have climbed to modernity under various sorts of governments, including a number of democratic (although not always very consultative) ones. This is of course so. The question then arises as to the relevance of Western (or Japanese post-Meiji) experience to the critical areas of the underdeveloped world. I think the relevance is slight for the following reasons:

1. The population crisis enjoins a much greater degree of haste for the contemporary backward world.

2. There has been no period of preparation comparable to the three centuries of European commercialization.

3. The backward world is handicapped by the deformations of imperialism.

Thus I hesitate to apply the lessons of the West to the East and South. However, if Wrong is merely arguing that the developing elites need not display the worst forms of totalitarianism; that a degree of tolerance is compatible with a strong modernization movement; and that a measure of freedom may be functional rather than otherwise, I would not disagree. Much depends on the personalities of the development leader and his opposition, on the tradition and circumstances of the country, etc. Nonetheless, I would argue (and again I doubt that Wrong would disagree) that strong tendencies must exist for extending and deepening the control of leadership, not only over political and economic life but into social and intellectual life as well. Perhaps I should point out, although Wrong has been good enough to do so for me, that in making this prediction I am not saying what I wish to have happen, but only what I think will happen, whether I wish it or not.

III. Taking off from these premises, I go on to state that left-authoritarian regimes, very likely, although not necessarily Communist, probably offer the best chance for a breakthrough in the backward areas. Here several points are to be examined:

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

1. Is such a breakthrough needed? Will not a slower process of change suffice?

As Wrong points out, my prognosis rests heavily on the urgency of the population program. It is this above all that sets the timetable. If Bogue is right, the timetable may be much extended and the necessity for rapid and radical action accordingly reduced. But is Bogue right? I am certainly far from convinced, and evidently neither is Wrong. Moreover, even if population growth *slows down*, will the deceleration come in time to avert economic and social crisis? Do not forget that populations will double in the most impoverished areas by the year 2000.

2. Will a revolutionary regime succeed in "breaking through"?

One cannot be sure. As Wrong points out, a Communist government may be ideologically unable to institute birth control. Or its ideological fervor, etc., may fall on deaf ears. Or it may just make terrible mistakes. In that case, I should think the probable outcome would be that mentioned at the end of his piece—there will be *no* modernization, and the future will be one of gradual deterioration, starvation, etc. I consider this an entirely possible state of affairs for the next generation. Yet one must ask, what is the chance for modernization if there is not an all-out revolutionary effort? This brings us back to my initial two premises.

3. Is there any evidence that the Communists can mount a successful development effort?

Wrong states that the Communists have so far delivered no more than promises. I would reply that promises are better than nothing. But are they only promises? Russia, to be sure, is a great mystery—is her development due to Communism or to pre-1913 industrialization? I would suggest that without Communism Russia would today be a kind of Brazil, with the extremes of Sao Paolo and the San Francisco Valley. But that is only a guess. The evidence as to Cuba buttresses my feeling that Castro has instituted a genuine and deeply-rooted change. Reston's *New York Times* articles (written after my *Commentary* piece) provide grist for my mill. As for China, who knows? What matters is the outcome after the present power struggle is resolved. I am impressed by Edgar Snow's observation in *The Other Side of the River* that whatever one may think of the Communist effort, there is no doubt that China has been profoundly and irreversibly changed. It is this kind of change that I believe to be an absolutely necessary condition for devel-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

opment; and at the base of my argument is my belief that among the existing political forces in the world only Communism is likely to be able to administer such a change. What other force does anyone suggest?

IV. Wrong emphasizes the destructive side of authoritarianism and its penchant for war.[3] There is something to be said for this, although I fear that democracy provides no guarantee of peace. (Do I dare mention India and Goa; England and Suez; France and Algeria; and the U.S. and its military adventures?)

But once again I am forced back to choosing between ugly alternatives. Revolutionary regimes bring a ruthless will and a desire to change "everything"; nonrevolutionary regimes seem unable to change even the few things that cry out for it. *If* we could have the best of both worlds—the enthusiasm, the dedication, the clear-cut program of the revolutionary, and the tolerance, open-mindedness, and decency of the gradualist—who would not welcome it? But I fear that in the existing condition of things we will have to make a far less palatable choice. If so, I opt for the party of "total" change. I repeat that if I had to take my chances here and now as an anonymous particle of humanity in China or India or in Cuba or Brazil, I would unhesitatingly choose the Communist side. Furthermore, I suspect Wrong would too. (To be sure, if I could choose to be an intellectual in both nations I would opt for the other side. But only a tiny few of the particles of humanity are intellectuals.)

V. Last, I am not much alarmed over the possibility of my counsel becoming a self-fulfilling prophecy.[4] Even if it were, I would prefer the difficulties of living in a world that was largely Communist in the backward areas and isolationist here in the U.S., to one that threatens to go Communist and that evokes from us the military response of a Vietnam. But in the end I am interested in making a historical forecast, not in preparing a blueprint for action. My forecast is that if modernization takes place in the backward world (and again I caution that it may not), it will be because of the efforts of revolutionary, and very likely Communist, regimes. I forecast as well that the successes of

---

[3] Let me object in passing that armies are not "utter waste" in backward areas. They are often very useful as a means of performing labor tasks, educating the peasants, and instilling morale.

[4] If I may be allowed one more footnote, I would also suggest that the temper of revolutionary regimes will be affected to some extent by our own attitudes. Certainly one reason for their bellicosity (I do not say the only reason) has been our own intransigent opposition to them.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

milder, democratic government in bringing modernization to the peoples of Latin America, Southeast Asia, and the Middle East will be small, if any. Let us wait 10 or 20 years and see which of us is right.

3. A Rebuttal by Dennis H. Wrong

I am glad Robert Heilbroner finds that I have correctly understood and presented his views. He has done as well with mine. Hopefully, the absence of rhetoric and polemical flourishes in our exchange will clarify the issues between us.

Heilbroner reiterates his conviction that left-authoritarian or communist movements "offer the best chance for a breakthrough in the backward areas." Whether he is right or wrong in this belief, he fails fully to confront the prior question of how likely in the near future such movements are to come to power at all and win the chance to show what they can do. Far from foreseeing any upsurge of democratic modernizing forces in the Third World, I argued that the present trend was toward the overthrow of *both* democratic governments and left-authoritarian regimes by the armed forces. Heilbroner is more hopeful —given his assumptions—than I am that there will be successful Communist revolutions; I am more hopeful than he that some modernization will take place under a variety of political regimes. He apparently regards such recent events as China's declining prestige in the Third World, the turmoil inside China, the overthrow of left-nationalist "strong men" in Indonesia, Algeria, and Ghana, the misadventures of "Arab socialism," and the repeated failures and defeats of Cuban-sponsored guerrillas in Latin America, as mere eddies in a broad historical current favoring revolutionary authoritarian regimes and movements. I, on the contrary, think that the Viet Cong may be the leaders of the last Communist-directed "war of national liberation" rather than the forerunners of a new revolutionary wave.

But if Heilbroner is right and Communist revolutions do take place in much of the Third World, can they achieve modernization? Communists have won power primarily by their own efforts in only five countries: Russia, Yugoslavia, China, North Vietnam, and Cuba. None of the three conditions Heilbroner adduces for doubting relevance of past Western experience to the contemporary underdeveloped world

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

was fully present in Russia or Yugoslavia, so their record is scarcely more pertinent to the argument than the successful modernization achieved under democratic auspices by England and the United States. As to China, I agree with Heilbroner—who knows? China may indeed have been "profoundly and irreversibly changed," but such change may or may not in the end facilitate the particular kind of "profound and irreversible change" we call modernization. In its exaltation of an ascetic, chiliastic revolutionary brotherhood, Mao's "cultural revolution" appears to be directed *against* assigning high priority to economic development and the materialism it inevitably brings rather than the reverse. North Vietnam has been involved in wars for over a decade. Cuba, a partially modernized country before Castro, has at most established some of the prerequisites for balanced modernization (e.g. mass literacy) while undergoing actual economic decline. I agree that promises are better than nothing, but Communists are not the only people in the Third World promising modernization.

The very polycentrism of the Communist world that makes nonsense out of the anti-Communist slogans invoked by Washington to justify the Vietnam war reduces the likelihood that future national Communist regimes will be the ruthless modernizers Heilbroner expects them to be. Would Egyptian national communism differ in any important way from Nasser's regime? Would an Algerian revolution create a state markedly different from the Ben Bella and Boumedienne dictatorships? Revolutions led by hard-bitten, Moscow-trained Stalinist orgmen might have a chance of successfully using totalitarian methods to impose the drastic surgery of modernization on a recalcitrant peasantry. So might revolutions led by men like Mao's original cadres. So might revolutions led by orthodox Marxist-Leninists like most of the national Communists of Eastern Europe. But post-Stalinist Moscow no longer tightly controls the Communist parties in the Third World (or, indeed, anywhere), and Maoism today has little in common with traditional Marxist-Leninist doctrine. Revolutionary movements in the Third World are likely to be shaped to a greater extent by national character traits than was the case in past Communist revolutions and such traits have usually been an obstacle—though by no means the only one—to modernization. The degree to which Communist parties in the Third World base themselves on dissatisfied ethnic, religious, and caste minority groups in their struggle against existing governments has been documented by Donald Zagoria. Can we really expect such parties, should they win power, to be as relentlessly future-minded as the puritanical, iron-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

willed Bolsheviks who are the prototypes for our model of totalitarian modernization?

If Heilbroner is right that Communist revolutions offer the only hope for modernization and I am right in doubting that there will be many successful revolutions in the near future, then the obvious conclusion is that there may be little or no modernization and that economic deterioration and political fragmentation are likely results. I agree that this is an entirely possible outcome for the next generation. It seems to me much more probable that disciplined, authoritarian revolutionaries will be able to seize power under conditions of mass famine and chaos than that they will succeed in overthrowing present governments which are maintaining some degree of order and economic progress, painfully slow though the latter may be. After all, in four of the five countries where indigenous communist movements have triumphed (Cuba is the one exception), the Communist seizure of power occurred during or immediately after devastating wars and foreign invasions that had disrupted agricultural life and destroyed the control of the previous governments over much of their territories. In such circumstances, determined revolutionary movements have their best chance of succeeding. But this possibility is not what Heilbroner has in mind: he sees Communist revolutions as a way of *averting* political and economic collapse rather than as an eventual consequence of collapse.

The issue of the timetable for modernization is really the crucial one. I agree that none of the existing regimes in the Third World, neither the formal democracies, the collectivist one-party states, nor the military dictatorships, have achieved full modernization. But "when we look at the positive side of our ledger sheet, we perceive an astonishing fact. Against all the obstacles to development that we have described, economic progress has in fact been taking place, and at a pace which by comparison with the past amazes us with its rapidity." So writes Robert Heilbroner on page 89 of his book *The Great Ascent*. He immediately observes that both the gains already achieved as well as future gains risk "being washed out by population growth."

Now I am indeed not fully convinced that Donald Bogue is right in predicting the imminent end of the population explosion. Who can have complete confidence in any forecast of something that has never happened before, like the mass adoption of birth control by peasant populations within a decade or two? But the probability of this happening seems to me somewhat greater than the probability of a wave

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of Communist revolutions in the Third World followed by the rapid achievement of modernization by the revolutionary regimes. The populations of the advanced countries, including Japan, have altered their childbearing habits in very short periods of time and without having been exposed to large-scale, state-directed campaigns urging them to do so. Since I wrote my original article, another leading American demographer, Frank Notestein, president of the Population Council, has expressed in the October *Foreign Affairs* qualified optimism over the prospect of new birth control methods spreading in the underdeveloped world and reducing current rates of population growth before the end of the century. If this should happen it will not remove entirely the urgency of the need for rapid modernization in the larger, more densely-populated areas, for even a rate of growth that is half the present one (and this Notestein considers possible) will still be an economic burden. But slower population growth will certainly make it easier for any regime committed to modernization to make some progress and will allow a wider margin for retrievable error.

I am aware that Heilbroner is making a forecast rather than advocating a course of action. But forecasts can become self-fulfilling if those who possess power are persuaded by and act on them. I too would prefer a Communist Third World and an isolationist United States to a succession of Vietnams; but is Heilbroner really prepared to give up all hope that the United States and the West in general can have any constructive influence on the economic development of the backward areas? Did the author of *The Future as History* mean by that phrase that it is as futile in the end to reflect on what still might be as it is to mourn over what might have been?

Special Offer

LID Membership and DISSENT Subscription

$10 per year

Please mail to:

LEAGUE FOR INDUSTRIAL DEMOCRACY
112 East 19 Street, New York, N.Y. 10003

☐ Enclosed is my check for $10.00
☐ Please send me information about the LID.

NAME.....

ADDRESS.....

.....

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

AMERICAN BEHEMOTH

The Concentration of U.S. Corporate Power*

Last May the United States Supreme Court annulled a "marriage." It ordered the dissolution of a merger between the third and sixth largest supermarket chains in Los Angeles. Two weeks later, reversing a lower court decision, it reinstated the Justice Department's challenge of the Pabst-Blatz brewing company merger. Both mergers, the court found, had taken place in industries marked by a steady trend toward economic concentration and both threatened to "substantially lessen competition."

In earlier decisions, federal courts had thwarted or dissolved what they regarded as "unholy matrimony" between du Pont and General Motors, Bethlehem and Youngstown Steel, Alcoa and Rome Cable, Continental Can and Hazel-Atlas Glass, and others as well.

Yet, in spite of such decisions, an unprecedented wave of mergers continues to sweep the nation. The number recorded by the Federal Trade Commission has climbed spectacularly from a yearly average of 1,162 in the 1955–1959 period to 1,893 in 1965. Since these statistics exclude bank, utility, and transportation industry mergers as well as hundreds of smaller mergers, the actual number in 1965 alone undoubtedly exceeded 2,000.

More recently, W. T. Grimm and Company, a private consulting firm which keeps tab on merger developments, reported a 25 per cent jump in the number of corporate mergers between the first half of 1965 and the first six months of 1966. And hardly a day has passed, even in the period following the latest Supreme Court decisions, without a news story referring to another merger.

Executives known to be interested in mergers "often get half a dozen calls or letters a day from persons peddling companies," reports *Newsweek* (April 25, 1966). "Company hunting is my night-time and weekend sport," says the head of a rapidly growing communications media firm. And *Dun's Review* (May 1966) describes how the president

* Reprinted from the *AFL–CIO American Federationist.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of Hewitt-Robbins "proposed" to Litton Industries, an industrial giant and an experienced hand at mergers, at noon on Thursday, negotiated the terms on Friday; and had them approved at a board meeting on the following Saturday morning.

The frantic merger kick upon which American business has embarked receives few front-page headlines. Yet, its implications are profound.

The power exercised by America's largest corporations is already enormous. As Professor Andrew Hacker of Columbia University points out: "The decisions made in the names of these huge companies guide and govern, directly and indirectly, all of our lives."

The giants of American industry have tremendous wealth and there are few restrictions on how they spend it. As a result, they have been able to set cultural standards and shape the social and political, as well as the economic, forms of American society to a far greater extent than most Americans realize.

They not only determine the prices we pay and the quality of the products we buy. They have an enormous influence as well, as Professor Hacker observes, over what we buy, the kind of work we do, how and where we do it, the kind of education offered to our children, the "regions of the country which will prosper" and those "which will stagnate," the social goals we set, and much more.

If this is true now, what will the future be like if the merger movement continues and an even greater portion of the American economy becomes concentrated in the hands of a small number of extremely powerful enterprises? Will the U. S. indeed become, as the title of an article by Hacker in *The New York Times Magazine* (July 3, 1966) suggests, "A Country Called Corporate America"?

Multi-Industry Giants

The "urge to merge" is not a new development in American history. Merger waves occurred in 1899, in 1920, and again from 1926 to 1929. However, none of the previous merger booms have been as prolonged as the current wave, now entering its twelfth year and still showing a vigor which belies its age.

Also, the current merger boom involves the giants and semi-giants of American industry—not just the little concerns struggling to keep their heads above water. According to Dr. Willard Mueller, Director of the Bureau of Economics of the Federal Trade Commission, the 200 largest manufacturing companies acquired "more than 2,000 concerns with combined assets of $17.5 billion" during the period from 1950 to 1964. That $17.5 billion exceeded the value of the assets held by all

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

manufacturing corporations between the 1,000 largest and the 2,000 largest in the fourth quarter of 1962. "In other words," said Dr. Mueller, "the acquisition activity of the top 200 was sufficient to more than wipe out the equivalent of the second tier of 1,000 corporations in manufacturing."

Many of the disappearing firms themselves have been large and important. Among those which have vanished as separate entities in recent years are a number whose names had become household words. They include Philco, Sperry, Sylvania, Glenn L. Martin, Squibb and Son, American Viscose, Pure Oil, Frito-Lay, Royal McBee, Briggs Manufacturing, Bell Aircraft, and Doehler-Jarvis.

These, however, were only the better-known among the departed. A total of 811 manufacturing and mining firms, each with assets of at least $10 million, disappeared through merger between 1948 and 1965.

Significantly, very few of these large corporations were failing concerns or even losing money in the year prior to being acquired. In fact, says Dr. Mueller, "a substantial percentage were very profitable enterprises." And, he concludes, "had they not been acquired they would most likely have continued as healthy economic enterprises capable of offering effective competition."

Another distinctive feature of the present merger wave is the extent to which companies are invading fields which have little or no relation to their traditional line of business. Horizontal mergers, mergers between firms which have been producing a similar product and selling in the same market, have become less common. Vertical mergers, in which companies link up with a customer or a supplier rather than a direct competitor, have increased somewhat but still account for only a small proportion of all mergers. Instead, conglomerate mergers—mergers between companies operating in different markets and without any previous buyer-seller relationship—have become the great fad.

Some conglomerates are more conglomerate than others. When the large national dairy concerns gobble up smaller dairy firms situated in areas in which the buyers have not previously operated, they are regarded as conglomerate because they have moved into new geographic market areas. When Continental Can merged with Hazel-Atlas Glass, it became a conglomerate by taking on the production of another type of container. In both instances, however, the merged firm was either producing the same product as before the merger or one that was closely related.

But when CBS buys the New York Yankees and Textron, which began as a textile manufacturer, takes over the manufacturing of helicopters, chicken feed, bathroom fixtures, men's shoes, rocket engines,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

eye-glass frames, and hearing aids, conglomeration begins to approach the ultimate. Companies like Textron and Litton Industries, FMC and Martin-Marietta have expanded so rapidly and into so many different fields that it is almost impossible to determine their principal line of business. Litton, in fact, now produces some 6,000 different products.

Use and Abuse of Power

This massive merger movement, along with rapid internal growth, is producing a fundamental change in the American economic land scape. The change is taking place on the national scene as a whole and in specific regions and industries as well.

In 1962, there were more than 180,000 manufacturing corporations in the United States. At least 220,000 other firms engaged primarily in manufacturing were owned either by single proprietors or by partners. Of these more than 400,000 separately-owned units, 100—one-fortieth of one per cent of all U.S. manufacturing firms—owned more than half of all the land, buildings and equipment in manufacturing. Their share of such assets, according to figures compiled by the staff of the Senate Antitrust and Monopoly Subcommittee, had risen from 45.8 per cent in 1947 to 56.9 per cent in 1962.

The fact that overall concentration rose at all during this period indicates a fundamental change in the American economy. "I, as an economist, would be concerned even if it had not gone up one percentage point since 1947," Dr. Mueller of the FTC declares. With the economy expanding so rapidly, "one would expect," he says, "that a small absolute number of firms . . . would have shrunk relatively." Yet overall economic concentration neither shrank nor remained constant. It advanced by 11.1 percentage points, or 24 per cent, in a period of 15 years.

If this rate continues, America will be faced with a condition of super-concentration within little more than a decade. By 1977, the 100 largest manufacturing corporations will control more than two-thirds of the nation's net manufacturing assets.

Besides increasing overall concentration, the merger movement has produced fundamental changes within specific industries. In 1958, the latest year for which figures are available, the four largest companies in 37 major industries accounted for more than 70 per cent of their industry's output. A general increase in such industry concentration ratios may have occurred after 1958 when the merger boom began to pick up additional steam. But, whether it did or not, the character of many industries has changed substantially.

The mere replacement of independent firms by conglomerate giants transforms the character of competition. The conglomerates may account

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

for no greater share of production then their less powerful predecessors. Yet they have a far greater advantage than their pedecessors had over the more specialized firms which continue to operate in the industry into which they have merged.

They can subsidize losses in one market with profits acquired in another market. They can use their huge purchases as leverage to persuade suppliers to buy their own products. And they can refuse to sell one product which may be difficult to obtain unless buyers are willing to accept other products as well. Consequently, when a firm, which has well over $100 million in sales and produces hundreds of products, replaces a company with sales of a few million stemming from a single product, a fundamental change in the character of the single-product market takes place even though sales shares may be no different than before.

Mergers also have resulted in fundamental changes within specific regions. Firms which may not appear large by national standards have acquired significant power in localized markets.

In the Brown and Kinney merger, the record showed that the two firms together accounted for less than 2 per cent of U.S. retail shoe sales. Yet, in each of 13 cities throughout the nation, they sold more than 50 per cent of women's or children's shoes. And, in the Philadelphia National Bank-Girard Trust merger, the Supreme Court noted that a significant trend toward concentration in commercial banking had been occurring in the Philadelphia area, with the number of commercial banks declining from 108 in 1947 to 42 in 1963.

This rapid expansion of large corporations may seem like a great American success story to some. However, it has aroused a gnawing concern in many others. Big firms have enormous power just because they are big. Money is power and big firms have huge sums of money at their disposal. The 500 largest industrial corporations—one-fourth of one per cent of all U. S. industrial corporations—received 72 per cent of all industrial profits in 1965. The after-tax profits of one firm alone, General Motors, exceeded the 1965 tax revenues of every state in the union except California and New York. It was greater even than the total revenues of 18 states combined. Most industry leaders make money almost automatically year-in and year-out.

As a result, as Professor Corwin Edwards of the University of Oregon points out:

> A big firm can outbid, outspend and outlose a small firm. It can advertise more intensively, do more intensive and extensive research, buy up the inventions of others, defend its legal rights or alleged rights more

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

> thoroughly, bid higher for scarce resources, acquire the best locations and the best technicians and executives. If it overdoes its expenditures, it can absorb losses that would bankrupt a small rival.

In 1960, 29 companies were convicted of a conspiracy to fix prices on the sale of billions of dollars of electrical equipment. They were fined $1,787,000, and seven executives were jailed for their part in the conspiracy. Since 1959, 11 firms in the steel industry have pleaded "no contest" to price-fixing charges.

However, the power amassed by America's industrial giants frequently enables them to achieve their aims without resorting to grossly illegal and even criminal actions like price-fixing. More commonly, executives in industries dominated by a few powerful firms are able to get around the law by "administering" prices. They do so through a system of price leadership under which one of the larger producers in the industry determines the price and the others follow more or less automatically (the smaller ones in particular feeling they have nothing to gain and much to lose by not "playing the game").

After an exhaustive study, the National Commission on Food Marketing described the pricing process and its results in the food industry as follows:

> When a few large firms dominate a field, they frequently forbear from competing actively by price; competition by advertising, sales promotion and other selling efforts almost always increases; and the market power inescapably at the disposal of such firms may be used to impose onerous terms upon suppliers or customers. The breakfast cereal field provides one of the clearest examples in the food industry: Four firms have 85 per cent of the business; advertising and sales promotion amount to 19 per cent of manufacturers' sales; retail prices of cereals rose more than other retail food prices between 1954 and 1964; profits are nearly double the average for all food manufacturing; and entry of a new competitor would be extremely difficult.

In a footnote concerning the movement of prices during the period referred to above, the Commission adds: "Retail prices per pound [of breakfast cereals] increased 45 per cent . . . while the Bureau of Labor Statistics' index of retail food prices rose 12 per cent."

Another example of administered pricing reveals the power of larger conglomerates in general not only to set prices but to use the profits which they reap in one market to destroy competitors in another. On March 6 of this year, the Federal Trade Commission forbade the National Tea Company, the fifth largest food chain in the U. S., from

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

acquiring any additional food retailing firms during the next 10 years without FTC's approval.

The Commission found that, during the period from 1951 to 1958, National had acquired 24 concerns having "some 485 retail grocery stores in 188 cities in 16 states." These acquisitions gave National the power to exact special concessions from suppliers and to charge non-competitive prices in several hundred cities in which it had a significant share of sales. It then used this power to subsidize below-cost operations in 141 cities "where competition is still vigorous enough to limit its pricing power."

National Tea was not undercutting competitors' prices in the latter cities. "On the contrary," the Commission said, "it has . . . a distinct aversion to even normal price competition; its preferred competitive weapons are acquisitions, the receipt of . . . price concessions and promotional allowances from suppliers, and massive store-building and advertising campaigns."

Since National Tea is not a charitable institution, the Commission surmised that it would recover its losses in those 141 cities. And it concluded "that this will be done not by efficiencies and economies in food retailing, but by a steady enlargement of its market shares in those cities until it acquires the same kind of pricing power it now enjoys in . . . other cities where it is already the dominant seller."

Merged organizations can ride roughshod over competition by virtue of sheer power in other ways. In 1951, the Consolidated Foods Corporation, a major food wholesaler, acquired Gentry, one of the two largest domestic manufacturers of dehydrated onions and garlic. It then proceeded to induce the food processors who are its own suppliers to buy onion and garlic products from Gentry in return for increased processor sales to Consolidated.

In 1965, the Supreme Court, concluding that Consolidated's reciprocal buying arrangement was likely to squeeze smaller onion and garlic companies out and to prevent new ones from coming into the market, ordered it to sever its ties with Gentry. It seemed clear to some people at least that unless such arm-twisting trade relations were broken up, the U.S. economy could end up as a vast cartel system dominated by giant conglomerates.

In another key case, the Supreme Court exposed the anti-competitive potential of the vertical type of merger which brings customers and their suppliers under the same management. They found that the du Pont Company's position as a supplier of finishes and fabrics to General Motors had been achieved only after it had purchased a substantial

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

amount of GM stock, one of its directors had become a member of the GM board, and a former du Pont sales manager had been appointed as a GM vice president. The Court concluded that "the acquisition had made it difficult, if not impossible, for other companies to sell substantial quantities of automotive finishes or fabrics to General Motors and therefore over the years the acquisition had resulted in a substantial lessening of competitive opportunity for such companies." It therefore ordered du Pont to sell its GM stock holdings.

Benefits for the Few

In spite of occasional court decisions like the du Pont and Consolidated Foods cases, mergers have clearly enhanced corporate power to set prices, bulldoze competition, and influence other aspects of American life. In the process, thousands of jobs have been merged out of existence as well—often with little or no provision for cushioning the impact upon those who have been displaced.

Yet not every merger is an unmitigated evil. Some, in fact, have genuine social value. Conceivably, a merger which rescues a failing firm from extinction may result in greater production, more jobs, and even greater competition than might otherwise have been the case.

Mergers, particularly the horizontal and vertical types, may also result in real gains in efficiency. Firms producing the same or related products may be able to use machines and manpower more effectively and more fully when they bring their operations under one management. Buying in larger quantities may provide significant savings in the packaging and handling of materials. An alliance with a supplier may improve the flow of work from one stage of production to another and prevent costly delays. These represent genuine gains in efficiency and they could under some circumstances result in lower prices, higher wages, and improved working conditions.

However, increased size via mergers or internal growth does not invariably result in genuine increases in the efficiency of production or distribution. Numerous studies have shown that medium-sized plants are often at least as efficient and in some cases more efficient than the largest establishments in an industry. They have also shown that the operation of many plants by a single company doesn't necessarily result in significant cost reductions. This appears to be especially true of the giant conglomerates producing a multitude of totally unrelated products. Horizontal or vertical combinations may in some cases achieve real savings by producing larger quantities of a particular product or by improving the flow of work from one stage to another. But the possibilities for genuine savings by highly diversified conglomerates are

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

minimal. The effort to coordinate a far-flung industrial empire—embracing parking lots, undertaking establishments, and countless other unrelated activities—may even lead to inefficiency and to added costs.

Nor are the largest firms the ones which invariably produce the greatest technological breakthroughs. One of the most revolutionary technological changes in steelmaking, the basic oxygen process, a process which produces steel six to eight times faster than the open-hearth method, was developed by a little Austrian firm less than one-third the size of a single plant of the U.S. Steel Corporation. And the first American firm to use the process was McLouth Steel—a company with less than 1 per cent of U.S. ingot capacity.

One of the most important innovations in petroleum refining—catalytic cracking—was developed by Sun Oil, one of the smaller firms in the refining industry. Most of the really significant structural auto changes in recent years have been developed abroad rather than by the giants of the American automobile industry. And it was only after foreign manufacturers and smaller domestic firms had demonstrated that there was a sizable market for them that the largest auto producers began to turn out compact cars in the United States.

The incentive to merge is often purely financial. It frequently has little or nothing to do with the introduction of new or improved products or more efficient methods of production. The one factor which stimulates merger activity more than any other—which produces the kind of feverish search for acquisitions we have been witnessing—is the accumulation of hoards of cash during periods of general business prosperity. With profits and depreciation soaring to all-time highs during the current boom, American corporations have been searching frantically for opportunities to invest their extra funds. And, for a number of reasons, they prefer to buy companies rather than to pay even higher dividends or invest in securities with fixed returns or build additional plants and equipment.

For one, the merger route provides a short cut to more rapid growth and higher profits; manpower, production facilities, and a market for the goods produced by such resources can be acquired overnight in one fell swoop. For another, a merger is a way to enter a new market without increasing the number of competitors.

A soaring stock market offers another inducement, totally unrelated to genuine efficiencies, to the merger-minded corporate executive. It offers a double inducement:

—An especially rapid increase in the stock price of one firm enables it to pay for another firm with fewer shares of its own stock.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

—An especially rapid increase in the price of the stock also gives a company a chance to improve its earnings per share by merging with a company whose earnings per share are higher than its own.

The hope that a merger—or even talk of a merger—will in itself cause stock prices to go up offers corporate executives still another purely financial incentive to merge. Many have become substantial stockholders through stock options or other transactions. For them, the rising stock prices resulting from mergers spell rising profits. And such profits have a special attraction because they are subject only to the low capital gains tax rather than the ordinary income tax.

There are other tax "angles" as well. Company A with large losses can be joined with Company B, a profitable firm, and the past losses of A can then be used to reduce the future tax liabilities of B. (This has resulted in some strange combinations, including the merger of a coal producer and an underwear manufacturer.)

Also, when the owners of an acquired company are paid in stock rather than in cash, the law regards the transaction as an exchange of assets. The sellers, therefore, pay no taxes on the gains they realize and this, of course, contributes immeasurably to their eagerness to merge.

The financial benefits for the few which mergers produce are obvious. The improvement in the production of goods and services which they create are not always so obvious. But even if they were, they would not offset the concern aroused by the disappearance of healthy firms with the capacity to compete effectively, the growing concentration of economic power, and the frequent abuse of such power.

Coping with Super-Concentration

The problem of economic concentration in America is not new. More than 15,000 mergers during the past 11 years, however, have added immeasurably to its urgency. More than ever before, America has become a nation of giant enterprises with enormous power to fix prices, drive small competitors to the wall, and deeply influence the behavior and social values of others.

No responsible organization suggests that all mergers should be banned and the tiny enterprises of an earlier era restored. No one really believes that twentieth-century America can be transformed into a model of eighteenth-century economic theory—a model in which no firm is large enough to exercise any significant power over prices or the volume of production. The American standard of living depends upon modern production methods. And modern production methods frequently require substantial investments in plant, equipment, and sales facilities.

However, the fact that relatively large-scale operations can yield

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

genuine social benefits does not mean that they automatically will. Presumably competition would compel firms to produce better products at lower prices. But in industries dominated by a handful of large firms, competition is weak and almost non-existent. Instead of being regulated by the forces of the marketplace, the dominant firms in such industries regulate the marketplace. The conglomerates, in particular, because of their position in so many different markets, are free of the pressures of any single market in which they operate.

Mountains of testimony before congressional committees, administrative agencies, and the nation's courts indicate that this enormous power of big business has frequently been abused. But even if there were no evidence of such abuse, the fact that so much power has been lodged in so few private hands should be a matter of deep public concern.

In the past, such concern led to the enactment of laws which have since become landmarks in American history. In 1890, Congress passed the Sherman Antitrust Act, making it illegal for a single company to monopolize trade or to conspire with others to fix prices or to divide up markets. Under this Act, the Standard Oil and American Tobacco trusts were broken up and the merger of the Northern Pacific and Great Northern Railroad was blocked.

In spite of such decisions, the Sherman Act had little effect upon the concentration of economic power. As a result, in 1914 Congress made another attempt to check growth of concentration. It passed the Clayton Act, which prohibited mergers between competitors even before they reached monopoly proportions. "To arrest the creation of monopolies in their incipiency," the Act outlawed mergers which "may substantially lessen competition or tend to create a monopoly."

But the Clayton Act, too, had little effect upon the problem of consolidations. A serious loophole made it virtually useless in coping with the great merger wave of the twenties.

To close that loophole and to broaden the scope of the Clayton Act, Congress passed the Celler-Kefauver Act of 1950. This amended the 1914 measure so that it clearly applied not only to mergers between competitors but to all mergers "which might substantially lessen competition or tend to create a monopoly"—including the vertical and conglomerate variety.

Still, the verdict of experts remained negative. Some of the cruder abuses, such as agreements to fix prices or divide markets, were either curtailed or driven underground. But the basic problem was still with us. As Professor Joe Bain observed in 1959:

> The existing anti-trust laws are considerably better than no such laws

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

at all, but they have fallen significantly short of the task of entirely or largely suppressing monopolistic performance tendencies in the economy.

Faced with the impracticality of wholesale "atomization" on the one hand and the dangers of "giving up" on the other, what can the nation do about the threat of ever-increasing concentration in American industry? Clearly, there are no easy one-shot solutions. There are, however, many measures which may be effective in dealing with parts of the problem. Used selectively and flexibly, with careful attention to the special circumstances of each case, their total contribution could be significant.

In the view of many who have studied the matter carefully, the following measures could be particularly helpful in dealing with the problems arising from mergers:

1. The parties to proposed mergers could be required to notify the government in advance. This would avoid unnecessary litigation and provide an opportunity for making arrangements which would preserve healthy competitive conditions. The American Newspaper Guild, for example, has proposed that the public be given at least 90 days' notice of a contemplated merger. During this period, persons other than competitors would have an opportunity to purchase the property at a fair market value before it could be merged with a competitor

2. Government agencies which enforce the anti-trust laws could be given the power to temporarily delay, subject to court appeal, mergers which they believe may be in violation of the law. As the National Commission on Food Marketing pointed out in advocating such authority, assets might otherwise "become intermingled before the government can act and, if divestiture is ordered, 'unscrambling' is difficult and expensive."

3. Corporations could be required to disclose sales, expenses and profits for each separate field of operation as well as in total—to tell "not only *how much* money they made but *where* they made it." Although conglomerates with a new kind of corporate structure have grown rapidly, financial reporting requirements have changed very little. For the most part, corporations are required only to divulge data concerning their total activities. As a result, not even the stockholders of Textron know whether Textron is reaping more of its gains from helicopters than men's shoes or fountain pens.

Actually, the Securities and Exchange Commission is now in the process of formulating requirements for information by division and in some cases by product. This should be completed and put into effect without unnecessary delay.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Security analysts favor more detailed reporting because knowledge of the specific sources of the sales and earnings of a particular firm would help in forecasting the future prospects of that firm. Also, such knowledge would help the government to determine whether a company was deliberately losing money in a particular market in order to drive out competitors. It would make it more difficult for firms to misleadingly contend, as frequently happens in collective bargaining, that although the company as a whole is making money, the division involved in the bargaining is suffering grievous losses. And it could prevent unwarranted mergers from taking place at all. One investment expert, an officer of the Dreyfus Fund, observes:

> Such disclosures may contribute to a much closer examination of new acquisitions, especially in unrelated fields, and may remove some of the incentive to grow for growth's sake without proper regard for the efficiency of existing operations and the stockholders' equity in the company. (Letter to Senator Philip A. Hart, D-Mich., May 26, 1965.)

4. The cloak of secrecy which now surrounds efforts to take over a firm through stock purchases could be lifted. Full disclosure is ordinarily required when one firm seeks to obtain control of another through an exchange of stock. However, legal loopholes make it possible for a corporation or group of individuals to purchase controlling blocks of shares of other firms without the latter's management or stockholders knowing about it.

The Pennzoil Company, for example, spent almost one year secretly buying up at least 275,000 shares of United Gas Corporation before openly indicating its desire to take over that company. One insider observed, according to *Business Week* (February 26, 1966): "We could have made a merger proposal to United but we certainly would have been turned down. That also would have tipped United that we were interested."

To prevent take-overs from occurring in virtual secrecy, Senator Harrison Williams (D-N.J.) has proposed a bill which would require disclosure when more than 5 per cent of a company's outstanding shares are acquired by a person or group of persons acting together. The bill would thereby provide safeguards for investors and workers, particularly against what Senator Williams calls "white-collar pirates" whose subsequent mismanagement can endanger jobs as well as stock values.

5. An increase in capital gains tax rates could dampen some of the present ardor for mergers which have little justification in terms of efficiency. Under present provisions, such gains, including gains from

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the sale of stock, are subject to lower tax rates than income from wages, salaries, and dividends.

One reason why corporations frequently have more cash than they know what to do with is that there is less pressure from stockholders for increases in dividends because of the capital gains provision. Corporate income which is invested can drive the price of stocks up. A shareholder can then sell his stocks at a profit taxable at the lower capital gains rate. On the other hand, corporate income distributed in the form of dividends is subject to the higher ordinary tax rates.

An increase in the capital gains tax would encourage stepped-up dividend payments and compel corporations, to a greater extent than otherwise, to meet the tests of the money markets for additional funds for mergers and other purposes. It would also perhaps reduce some of the enthusiasm for mergers exhibited by executives with huge stock options.

A number of other measures are available to combat monopolistic tendencies in general:

1. Existing legislation could be enforced more aggressively, with increasing attention to the growing number of conglomerate mergers. One of the reasons for the current popularity of conglomerate mergers is the knowledge that it is less likely to be challenged because it results in the substitution of one firm for another rather than in the immediate elimination of a competitor (and, therefore, an increase in concentration) as in the case of a horizontal merger.

However, judgments cannot rest solely on shares of the market controlled by conglomerates. The enforcement agencies must be more vigilant in rooting out anti-competitive practices in such situations. Some experts have even suggested that potential or probable anti-competitive effects be a basis for action. And the courts have already upheld such action.

2. Stronger deterrents to anti-trust violations are necessary. Jail sentences where justified are obviously far more effective than fines of a few thousand or even a few hundred thousand dollars for firms whose profits run into the millions.

At the very least, the effect of financial penalties should not be diluted. To this end, Senator Hart has introduced a proposal to make it easier to collect damages from anti-trust violators. Under present law, violators frequently prefer to plead "no contest" in criminal anti-trust cases. They do so in order to avoid a guilty verdict which could be used by their victims as evidence to collect triple damages in civil suits.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Senator Hart's bill, however, would close this escape route by giving "no contest" as well as guilty pleas status as evidence in civil suits.

Another proposal by Senator Hart would deny violators the right to deduct treble damage payments from their taxable income as though they were ordinary business expenses. A ruling by the Internal Revenue Service permitting such a deduction resulted in a $200 million reduction of the penalty imposed on the 29 electrical equipment manufacturers convicted of conspiracies to fix prices.

3. Government procurement policies should support rather than undermine government anti-trust policies. Rising federal purchases can have an impact on the structure of the economy and should be constantly reviewed to ensure that efficiently operated small and medium-size firms are participating in government orders.

4. In industries dominated by a few firms which are difficult to enter because of large investment requirements or other barriers, the government should provide special financial assistance to encourage the entry of new firms. Or it might even establish a government-owned corporation like the TVA to provide a yardstick by which to judge and improve the performance of other firms in the industry.

5. Determined action along the lines suggested thus far can do much in the longer run to deal with the kind of pricing power which has imposed a heavy burden during the past years upon families with limited incomes and inhibited the government from taking more vigorous steps toward full employment. However, more direct and immediate action is necessary. Such action could take the form of direct Congressional investigations of the price-profit-investment policies of dominant firms in important industries. Or it could result in the establishment of a special board which would hold hearings and publish findings and recommendations concerning intended price increases by dominant firms in key industries before such increases actually took effect.

This list of remedies could be extended. No combination of measures, however, can ever be fully effective without a much greater appreciation of the dimensions of corporate power in the American economy today, the freedom with which that power is currently exercised, and the danger of allowing it to continue to reside in the hands of the officials of a few private corporations.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

COMMUNICATIONS

Jim Swan

On Literary Criticism and Political Action

It was a pleasure to read Lawrence W. Hyman's statement: "It is not a moral direction that we must look for in literature but a disturbance" ("Literature and Political Action," DISSENT, July–August 1967).

Hyman provides an exciting way for handling moralistic objections—from Left and Right—that art is too often dissociated from our moral and political concerns. Since, however, he styles himself a contextualist critic, Hyman must be aware that with this idea of art he is keeping rather strange company.

The idea that art provides not order but disturbance, that it upsets and exercises the categories of perception we bring to art and to the world in general, belongs to the behavioral sciences, to transactionalism and the New Look in perception theory. With necessary oversimplification, it means that the widely held idea that art provides, reveals or creates order requires the false assumption that reality or, more properly, our perceptions of reality are chaotic or at least disordered. Whereas, in fact, we would be unable to function at all without possessing very highly ordered categories of perception to use every minute of the day. Consequently, it means that, given such a need for order, we have an equally pressing need for disorder; or, again more properly, for disturbance of our very highly ordered perceptions, so as to avoid hardening into the rigidity of perception that is psychic, and eventually physical, death.

Finally—and this is where Hyman contradicts himself—it means that art provides no special knowledge, as is widely claimed by humanists defending the arts against the sciences. To make this claim is to involve yourself inextricably, as Leavis and Snow did, in the pseudo-problem of "realism" in the arts, which means making a theory of the purely ethnocentric notion that art provides special insight into reality. Such a notion could be held only by those immersed in a culture demanding that its artists "represent" reality and equating art with "imitation." In the history of civilization, which is also the history of art, such a culture has had only a very brief and very local existence.[1]

Hyman, then, seems to be taking

---

[1] For the source of these brief remarks see Morse Peckham's persuasive analysis of the problem: *Man's Rage for Chaos: Biology, Behavior, and the Arts.* New York: Chilton, 1965.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

away with his right hand what he gives with his left. He sees the important political (and, we should add, *biological*) function of art as a provider of disturbances. But as contextualist critic, he still holds to the notion that art provides a special sort of knowledge or, in the verses of Wallace Stevens quoted by Hyman:

> A tune beyond us, yet ourselves,
> A tune upon the blue guitar
> Of things exactly as they are.

The problem here is one that we all, as intellectuals, share, a problem of lifestyle. And the split in Hyman's thinking corresponds—I'm willing to bet—with a split between the way he perceives, as critic and scholar, a novel by Melville, and the way he perceives, as part of our contemporary audience, a novel by Bellow or Ellison, or a movie by Bergman or Fellini. In the transaction between the contemporary artist and his audience, both take for granted that they live in the same time and place, and share essentially the same cultural assumptions. Here, the role of the artist is to disturb those assumptions. After all, we reserve a very contemptuous label, "sentimentality," for the work of art that caters to our naive assumptions about life.

With art of another culture, though, we need some idea of the original audience's expectations. For this we turn to the academic scholar-critic, whose role it is to describe cultural assumptions, as sets of expectations, and thus teach us how to be disturbed —or "moved"—by art not of our own culture. Only in this sense of a set of expectations do we speak with validity of literary "form." Not inhering in any particular work, it is what we as scholar-critics abstract out of a chronological series of literary works. It is ourselves, and not artists, who are interested in form as such. Artists, as artists, violate form; and it is the violation that an audience responds to. Picasso, understanding this, has remarked that he creates a painting by a series of destructions.

This is a matter of distinguishing between two roles: audience and scholar-critic. In one, we experience the disturbances of art; in the other, the suppression of disturbances is a condition of our work in describing and judging the "form"—or set of expectations—which those disturbances violate. One's role as audience requires a pliancy and quickness of felt reaction; while action and feeling are irrelevant, if not hostile, to the work of the scholar-critic. Hyman confuses these roles. And with the claim that art provides a special sort of knowledge, he hypostasizes literary "form," carrying its intellectual qualities of aesthetic distance and calm into the particular work where they have no place.

It is only such a confusion of roles, and what Whitehead called the "fallacy of misplaced concreteness," that, to my mind, will account for statements like the following: "The novelist, unlike the political scientist or the psychologist, tries to 'understand' the situation not in order to act more intelligently, but to bring us to *a level of experience in which all action is irrelevant* [my italics]. Or: "An artist reaches his greatness not by subordinating his impressions to his moral or personal bias, but by getting out of himself."

Though these statements say very little about art or artists, they do say

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

a great deal about the life-style which our culture values and which we all share as intellectuals, scholars and critics; it is a life-style of non-action (dealing with levels of experience in which all action is irrelevant) and non-emotion (resting in a state of detached calm outside oneself). That phrase, "personal bias," for instance, is one of those mild smears against feeling that, as scholar-critics, we make almost by unconscious reflex. And *feeling* is the necessary third factor missing from the unreal choice that Hyman presents to us, between thought and action, prejudice and experience, in the civil rights situation illustrating his argument. Aside from the obvious special pleading for the artist's (presumably higher) "level of experience in which all action is irrelevant," there is really no reason for distinguishing between novelist and civil rights worker. Though the novelist may understand a Georgia red-neck, it doesn't mean that he can't, *as novelist,* hate the man's cowardly threatening of Negro children. Not to hate an evil act isn't just bad morals, it's bad art.

Again, where Hyman says that the artist performs his role "by getting outside himself," it would be just as sensible to say, with Horace, that the artist does best by getting *inside* himself. Actually, our behavior corresponds more to a dialogue between prejudice and experience; which is what perception is, and it is only by keeping the dialogue alive that we keep acting intelligently, be we novelists or civil rights workers. It is not surprising, after all, that Hyman chooses Wallace Stevens as spokesman for his understanding of art. It would be hard to find more of a snob, a man more autocratically disdainful of dialogue than the poet of the blue guitar with his aesthetician's fantasy of a cool, Apollonian understanding "Of things exactly as they are." Stevens gives us a perfect figure for the manner of knowledge in Western culture: a knowledge "beyond us"—outside us where we can deal with it, as if scientifically, without contaminating it with our feelings—"yet ourselves"; that is, giving us the illusion that, nevertheless, we really are dealing with ourselves. As the Greeks knew, this *is* an illusion. Our competence at dealing with "reality"—or whatever you wish to call it—however actual as a technology, is like the competence of Oedipus at solving the riddle of the Sphinx, an illusion of competence.

What breaks the illusion is dialogue, politically the democratic interaction of peers with one another; while our role as scholar-critics, to which action and feeling are irrelevant, coincides with the "politics" of the totalitarian state in which political action is as irrelevant as it is impossible, short of revolution. The scholar-critic, working within ideas of order, sees art as a way of understanding culture, while the artist means to change it, to disturb those categories of perception by which we understand and communicate our culture in time and space. Hence Plato's ban on artists from the ideal state: they make disturbances and upset the political order. So, if the artist thus initiates political action, the scholar-critic acts out, and in the classroom teaches by example, a role to which *all* action is irrelevant, to say nothing of political action.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

A Reply by Lawrence W. Hyman

Mr. Swan's distinction between the "order" in our everyday perception and the "disorder" aroused by art is compatible with my own statements. And I agree with him also in believing that literature provides no special sort of knowledge. Our disagreement, as I see it, is essentially over the question of what happens to our emotional response when we move from an actual event (where a man is threatening the child with a gun, to use our common example) to the artistic treatment of this event. Mr. Swan argues that there is no essential change: if we hate the man in reality, we will hate him in the novel or the play. And he further argues that the absence of such an emotion, which I find in the literary experience, implies "non-emotion," or "detached calm."

My answer, in brief, is that one can experience emotions which do not issue forth in action. The hatred I would have in the real situation would make me try to stop the man. The hatred I would have toward a fictional character would be of a different kind. For if the novelist is at his best, he would make me go beyond my "highly ordered categories of perception" which I normally have, and force me to see the "villain" from the inside.

> Not absence of desire and thought but their thorough incorporation into perceptual experience characterizes the aesthetic experience. . . . The aesthetic experience is free from desire . . . in the sense that desires are fulfilled in the perception itself.
>
> (John Dewey, *Art As Experience*, p. 254.)

As for Mr. Swan's final point, I fail to see that nonaction in the aesthetic experience leads to nonaction in practical affairs. Logically, one might even argue that a formalist, having no faith in the capacity of literature to move the reader in any particular direction, must fulfill his moral commitments by putting down his book and picking up a picket sign. Conversely, those who look to literature for a moral purpose may very well neglect their responsibilities as citizens and use literature as a substitute for political action.

However, the main point in my essay is not to bring out the weaknesses of the moralistic approach to literature, but to explore the possibility that even in the aesthetic experience itself there is a value, and a value that is particularly necessary for those with strong political and moral commitments. For when we fulfill our "desires in the perception itself," we add another dimension to our experience. We see and feel life outside of our own immediate needs and desires at a level which transcends ordinary experience. And the kind of society that I would want, and which I believe Mr. Swan would want also, is one in which we are more than political animals. But vigorous and intelligent political action is necessary for this kind of society—and on this point I believe that Mr. Swan and I are in agreement.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Jay Schulman

Riessman on Alinsky: Again*

Frank Riessman has been conducting a vendetta against Saul Alinsky for some time: first an article in *Transaction* and now one in DISSENT ("The Myth of Saul Alinsky," July–August 1967).

Riessman's articles are objectionable because he represents them as scholarship although he has made no first-hand study of Alinsky-guided community organizations, has distorted journalistic accounts when to do so has suited his purposes, has selectively chosen available accounts to document his charges, and has offered hearsay as facts.

Beyond the question of Riessman's evidence, there is the logic of his analysis, for his criticisms of Alinsky in DISSENT involve more than the miscellaneous facts of community organization in any one city. Riessman makes use of at least six criteria to evaluate the effectiveness of Alinsky as a community organizer. Moreover, these criteria presumably could be applied to weigh the effectiveness of any form of community organization or social movement, not just the work of Alinsky.

In this brief comment, I shall ask whether the FIGHT organization in Rochester, using Riessman's own criteria, is the failure Riessman asserts it (and Alinsky) to be.

Have FIGHT's results been new and different to date? I would answer categorically yes. The first result has been to demonstrate that it is possible to meld hitherto inarticulate elements of the new Negro middle classes into a black power type organization espousing the aspirations of the ghetto underclasses. That this has been possible with white organizers indicates, in my judgment, the emerging consciousness of the importance of mobilizing counter-power in black ghettos and is a tribute to the professionalism of Alinsky and Edward Chambers. However, since it is a paradox for whites to act as organizers of black power organizations, the emergence of black power consciousness in all probability will oblige Alinsky to cease direct action as a community organizer of Negroes and concentrate upon training Negroes as organizers.

The second result has been to secure recognition for a black power organization from dominant white industrial organizations like Eastman Kodak and Xerox at a time when white public opinion has become increasingly hostile. The new dimension in the struggle between FIGHT and Kodak has not been jobs for the hard-core unemployed, important as that is, but FIGHT's right to represent the underclasses directly in negotiations with Rochester industry.

A third result has been the formation of Rochester Jobs Incorporated, a new corporation financed entirely by

* Frank Riessman's reply to this communication will appear in our next issue.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

industry, with a board of directors including representatives from FIGHT and other civil rights agencies, aimed at providing as many as 1,500 jobs, and job training for the unemployed and under-employed. As William Vaughn, chairman of the board of Eastman Kodak, put it, "FIGHT has to be given credit for bringing Rochester Jobs Inc. into existence." Although Rochester Jobs Inc. has yet to prove itself, its establishment is notable on at least two counts. First, it shows that a conservative industrial and financial leadership can be pressured into participation in social innovation. Second, it attests to the readiness of a black power oriented leadership to work with the establishment to meet the needs of poor Negroes.

Has FIGHT reached the most deprived members of the Rochester ghettos? If "reach" here means have large numbers of these people become directly involved in the activities of FIGHT, the answer is no. If on the other hand "reach" means, have a considerable number of these people's lives or attitudes been affected by FIGHT, the answer is unqualifiedly yes. Several hundred persons have either obtained jobs through the direct or indirect actions of FIGHT. Out of 271 Negro young adults interviewed in pool parlors, "dives," barber shops, and on stoops, 220 or 71.2 per cent were aware of FIGHT and 44 per cent of these youngsters were aware of someone who had been helped by FIGHT to make a job contract. Of the potential riot-makers 17 per cent also saw FIGHT as a possible alternative to civil insurrection. The influence of FIGHT was made dramatically clear in the early morning of last July 24 when Minister Florence was able to prevail upon several hundred youngsters, some of whom had begun to stone police cars, to return to their homes.

Will FIGHT survive the next several years, and if so can institutionalization be avoided? White church-funding runs out in March of 1968. It is highly unlikely that the churches will care to provide the major funding for a fourth year. FIGHT had about $5,000 in its treasury after two full years of operation. It is reasonable to expect that FIGHT will be able to raise at least another $5,000 this year.

Nevertheless, if FIGHT is to continue at its current level of activity with a full-time staff, its officers will have to invent ways of raising funds from the ranks of middle-class Negroes and the underclasses as well. Rising black solidarity should enable FIGHT to become self-sufficient financially within a year or two. The continuing availability of federal funds for community-administered programs will undoubtedly contribute to FIGHT's survival.

Will FIGHT be able to maintain its militant orientation as it becomes more intertwined with establishment agencies in seeking new programs in housing, education, and other areas of ghetto concern? If the past offers any lesson, it is that the more successful a protest group is in having its demands met, the more likely it is to moderate its demands and to develop vested interests in protecting its newly found status. On the other hand, FIGHT is not a community organization; it is an expression of forces that

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

are crystallizing throughout both black and white America. FIGHT, whether Alinsky likes it or not, is and will be greatly influenced by the impetus that is being built up by the black power movement and by white reaction. White racism is so pervasive and the problems of the urban ghettos so pernicious that militancy may be maintained over a period of years in spite of local successes. Indeed, it is possible that the flow of national and local events may lead to a radicalization of organizations like FIGHT before they level off into respectable defenders of the status quo.

The coming of the Urban League to Rochester was the direct result of the 1964 riot and the resulting call to Alinsky. Thus a new middle-ground agency was added to the Rochester scene through which the city and employment groups have channeled funds and in which integration-minded Negro leaders have been able to find a leadership role. Rochester Jobs Inc. is a dramatic example of a new mechanism for seeking a partnership between industrial firms and ghetto organizations.

Yet every useful social invention brings with it liabilities. Rochester Jobs Inc. could lead to a deterioration in the services of the public employment agency. The Board of Urban Ministry's unflagging support of FIGHT could lead to a reorganization of the structure of the Council of Churches that might restrict the Council's role. A serious racial disorder in Rochester might eliminate FIGHT from the scene.

Has FIGHT begun to develop political links with black power organizations in other cities, constituting thereby one link in a national network? These contacts have been sparse so far. But there are signs of such a possibility. This political reality depends more, I think, upon the capacity of the black power movement to generate cohesive community organizations in major American cities than it does upon the readiness of FIGHT officials or the will of Alinsky.

Have the activists in FIGHT shown signs of radical politization? What has happened so far in my judgment is that a group of lower-middle-class Negroes whose political orientation was nil or tied to the initiative of white liberals has developed a political consciousness based upon color

LEAGUE FOR INDUSTRIAL DEMOCRACY
Public Forum

ORGANIZING THE POOR
The "Alinsky" Model vs.
"New Careers" Model

Speakers:
JAY SCHULMAN
FRANK RIESSMAN

Friday November 17
8 P.M.

BROTHERHOOD-IN-ACTION
AUDITORIUM
560 Seventh Ave. (at 40th St.)
New York City

Registration: $1.00

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and the plight of the ghetto underclasses. These people have, in effect, disaffiliated in their public life from the mainstream of white society in order to provide leadership and direction to the black ghetto have-nots. Whether these leaders and their successors will move on to another stage where alliances with radicals, regardless of color, are considered politically desirable, is another question.

Riessman's animus toward Alinsky notwithstanding, he does raise an important question when he asks whether old or new Leftists have anything to learn from Alinsky. The answer depends less upon Alinsky's interest in ideology—for Alinsky is not an ideologue, although he has an ideology—and more upon Alinsky's practical insights into the uses of power in the accomplishment of social change. There is much that radicals can learn from Alinsky about the strategies of accumulating and exercising counter-power. There is much cising counterpower—and much about the ethics of responsibility and the courage needed in the everyday pursuit of counter-power. Finally, there is much that radicals can learn from Alinsky and his disciples of the fellowship that can be had from social conflict.

Indeed, if anything, Riessman's broadside against Alinsky suggests why Alinsky seems relevant to members of the New Left. Apparently, these radicals feel there is more to be learned from an able organizer who understands the use of power than there is from insider intellectuals like Riessman who remain tied to familiar categories, sounding credos, and who dab ble as organizers on the side.

NEW PAMPHLETS FROM

The A. Philip Randolph Educational Fund

THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT RE-EXAMINED
by
C. VANN WOODWARD, PAUL FELDMAN, BAYARD RUSTIN
— — — Three incisive analyses of the past and present forces at work in the civil rights movement and how they affect the future. With an Introduction by A. Philip Randolph 50c

NEW CAREERS
by FRANK RIESSMAN
— — — A leading spokesman for new efforts to involve the poor in meaningful employment outlines a program for the training of non-professionals, which can serve as an effective civil rights and anti-poverty strategy. With an Introduction by Michael Harrington. 50c

THE URBAN POOR
by ST. CLAIR DRAKE
— — — A distinguished social scientist examines the historical efforts to help the black and white poor in the rural areas, and sees the problem to be now firmly located in our urban centers. He concludes that past efforts have not had much success and that the nation still has "miles and miles" to go. With an Introduction by Bayard Rustin. 50c

THE CITY IN CRISIS
by RALPH ELLISON, WHITNEY YOUNG, JR., HERBERT J. GANS
— — — Three perspectives on the growing cultural, social, and economic problems confronting urban centers and their ethnic minorities.

THE A. PHILIP RANDOLPH EDUCATIONAL FUND
217 West 125 Street
New York, N.Y. 10027
50 or more 40c per copy
100 or more 30c per copy
1000 or more 25c per copy

I enclose $..... for ..... copies
(each) of (1) ..... (2) .....
(3) ..... (4) .....
Name.....
Address.....
City.....
State.....Zip.....

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

BOOKS

Walter Goldstein

The Fallacies of Fulbright

THE ARROGANCE OF POWER, by Senator J. William Fulbright. New York: Random House. 265 pp. Cloth, $4.95; paper, $1.95.

This long-awaited volume by the Chairman of the Senate's Committee on Foreign Relations is intensely disappointing. It provides an eloquent but rambling sample of the Senator's rhetoric on a number of subjects. Unfortunately, it gives no answer to the two questions that are most frequently asked about this laconic Southern dissident:

> *1) How did so characteristic a conservative Dixiecrat come to be identified as the leader of the liberal and "peace" groups in Congress?*
> *2) Is he truly concerned that his political leadership should be effective—after all these years—to influence the formation of American foreign policy?*

It appears that the Senator is too reserved to discuss his own position in public and too disdainful of political debate to reveal his own aspirations and grievances. We will have to wait until a biography appears which can coolly evaluate the complex motives that have moved this Whiggish politician.

Because there is no convincing answer to the first question raised, a feeling of unreality pervades his book. One might never suspect from its liberal sentiments that the Senator had voted for nearly 20 years with the most conservative bloc in Congress. Though he had shown courage in opposing the assaults of McCarthy, his record on other domestic issues revealed a depressing consistency. He voted for the Mundt-Nixon draft of the Internal Security Act, for the McCarran-Walter Immigration Act, and for the Taft-Hartley restrictions on labor unions. His position on the Dixon-Yates attack on TVA was as illiberal as his position on the racial conflicts in Little Rock. As a loyal Southerner, he reflected Arkansas opinion on civil rights and on the boodling interests of the natural gas lobby. As a member of the Foreign Relations Committee since 1945, and as its chairman since 1958, his contributions to debate rarely challenged (until 1965) the Cold War stereotypes that passed for thought in the State Department. Hence, it is astonishing that Fulbright should now be identified as a leading critic of Cold War orthodoxies and that he should even be named by those urging a Kennedy-Fulbright ticket for 1968.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Nonetheless, this former Rhodes scholar has occasionally indulged in more liberal activity. Working covertly in the Senate cloakrooms, or during his informal visits with President Kennedy in the White House, Fulbright took quiet but decisive action over the right-wing indoctrination programs (given by Major General Walker and others) in the armed services. In his own quiet way he expressed opposition to the Dulles formula of brinkmanship at Dienbienphu in 1954, over the Aswan Dam in 1956, and during the Lebanon invasion in 1958. Nevertheless, his privately circulated memos failed to gain attention or mobilize support. It eventually dawned upon him, during the Bay of Pigs fiasco of 1961, that his cautious dissent could be easily ignored. Yet it was at this very time that he said, in a speech at the University of Virginia (in April 1961), that the Senate should *not* criticize the policy choices of the Executive too harshly. It could not "substitute its judgment" for that of the President "without confusing the image and purpose of this country in the eyes of others." By emphasizing Legislature self-restraint, Fulbright permitted many of the developments to occur which he now decries. Moreover, by humbling the Senate's "watchdog" function over foreign policy, his Committee was able to confirm without criticism the nomination of all the top office holders in the Kennedy and Johnson administrations. Many of them had earned their credentials as propagandists for Cold War strategies in the 1950's; practically none had disavowed the pact-building absurdities of Mr. Dulles or the Manichean belief that the Sino-Soviet bloc remained united for the cause of world revolution.

The second question, concerning the Senator's effectiveness as a critic, must revive discussion about the proper relationship between the Legislative and the Executive. During the Eisenhower and Kennedy years, Fulbright aired his criticisms discreetly. He was an elite counsellor and an

VIETNAM PEACE PROPOSALS

- PEACE PROPOSALS by U Thant, Thich Nhat Hanh, Jim Burnett (YPSL), United Auto Workers, Americans for Democratic Action, and others.
- CRITERIA to help distinguish peace proposals from proposals which argue for present U.S. policy, unilateral withdrawal or further escalation.
- INITIATIVES which the United States could (and should) unilaterally take to establish conditions for a stable peace in Southeast Asia.

"extremely valuable"
Norman Thomas

"a dispassionate study ... suitable for the classroom"
Merrill Hartshorn Nat'l Council for the Social Studies

"highly recommended, indeed a must . . ."
War/Peace Report

54 pp. — — $75, postpaid when remittance accompanies order.

Bulk rates on request, classroom examination copies available.

WORLD WITHOUT WAR COUNCIL, 1730 Grove, Berkeley, Calif. 94709

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

eminence grise. But in this present volume, he insists that the Senate should be "an institution in which the great issues of American politics are contested," presumably in public. This reversal on the uses of public debate, it is assumed, appeared after the White House had ignored his warnings against invading at the Bay of Pigs and in Santo Domingo. He was supposedly embittered, too, by the limitless authority which President Johnson drew from a short resolution that he had helped rush through the Senate in 1964. Strangely, considering his new attitude, the Senator expresses no regrets about the wider issues raised by the Tonkin Gulf resolution. He fails to mention that the press unearthed better information than the Senate about the dubious naval activities that occurred in the Gulf at that time. Nor does he admit that the Senate had seriously defaulted in gathering data and questioning officials during the seven years in which the French fought in Vietnam—or during the next 10 years, while American preparations helped pave the way for the contemporary massacre.

The unreality of the Senator's book must be ascribed, therefore, to the constant discrepancy between his public actions and his published statements. Even if it is assumed that he experienced a religious conversion at some point, which allowed him to shrug aside (without explanation) the beliefs he previously held, it is still necessary to inquire into the drift of his current activities. The rhetoric in this book demonstrates that even though opposed to the arrogant power and zealous manipulation practiced by the United States in its role as world policeman, he yet refuses to give leadership to any political factions intent upon challenging the President's policy leadership. If it is true that his reticence stems from the reflective rather than combative bent of his personality, we still do not know whether he yearns to be personally effective at last in checking the rush to disaster in Vietnam. If he does, it is incredible that he can resign himself to such an impotent role. To cite one brief example: not one witness has been called before the Committee and asked to explain the crass meddling by recent U.S. ambassadors in Saigon. Two of them intervened vigorously in Vietnamese politics and helped the political generals stifle rural development and land reform, but neither was called to account by the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations.

To put it even more bluntly, the Chairman's passivity and lack of curiosity are partly responsible for the "credibility gap" attributed to the present Administration. Given his position of skepticism about the Administration's policy, he has done remarkably little to investigate its premises. This book is replete with condemnations (but not investigations) of the objectives of our foreign policy and his phraseology is pleasantly caustic. Unhappily, the striking factor about this book is its political irrelevance. It tells the reader nothing about the fundamental change of political values which its author evidently experienced. And it gives no clue to the Chairman's desire or ability to translate his new visions into effective political action. As a policy critic, he is eloquent but unexplained. As a political leader, he remains a chameleon.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Hubris of the American Century

ABUSE OF POWER, by Theodore Draper. New York: The Viking Press. 244 pp. Paper, $1.95.

There has been no dearth of commentaries on the Vietnam War and on the crisis into which it has plunged this country. The very proliferation of writings is a measure of the depth of this crisis: no comparable output accompanied, for example, World War II, even though it cut much deeper into the fabric of U.S. society.

Among the recent critical writings many have been valuable in one way or another. But, at least to my knowledge, none of these so far has treated the theme as comprehensively and, at the same time, concisely, as Theodore Draper's new book. It shares the qualities of Draper's previous work: his respect for facts, his concern with truth, his getting at the roots. His judgment becomes all the more devastating for not neglecting nuances and degrees of responsibilities. Above all, he puts the U.S. role in the Vietnam War in relation to similar actions in Cuba and Santo Domingo. Draper does not ignore the realities of power; his critique is directed against its abuse, not against its use.

What emerges from this analysis is a policy that increasingly substitutes military means for political and economic ones and relies more and more on the exercise of naked power. The result is that it makes a political solution less possible.

Draper follows the Vietnam War through what he calls its seven major "turning points," from the decision by Truman-Acheson to aid the French colonial administration in 1950, to the take-over of the war from the South Vietnamese in Fall 1966 (step 6), and the intensified attacks on the North (Hanoi-Haiphong) in February 1967. With each step the American military investment has increased, and each increase has made it more difficult for the U.S. to extricate itself from this originally unwanted involvement. For each time, and under four different Presidents, we have come to do exactly what we knew (and said) should not be done. Yet, increasingly difficult as it may have become, there has always existed, and still exists, the option to de-escalate a war that—except for a few blind military minds—both sides must know they cannot win.

In this connection, Draper examines the question whether John F. Kennedy would have avoided the extent of involvement that has occurred since 1965. Both Eisenhower and Kennedy, while extending the U.S. commitment, had resisted the pressures of their hawks to a substantial degree. But the reasons given by Kennedy's aides for his increase of political and military assistance, apparently against his own better judgment—namely that he "had no choice, but to work within the situation he had inherited" (Schlesinger)—this could equally be applied to defend Johnson's escalations. Draper questions whether Kennedy himself would have used such an easy excuse,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and finds this sense of fatality the most devastating aspect of our Vietnam policy.

Another appalling aspect of this wrong-headed policy stands out in Draper's examination: the corruption of language and reasoning, the amount of deceit and self-deception it has produced among our policy-makers. These corruptions have reached Orwellian proportions, and in his painstaking research of sources Draper amasses a truly amazing collection of examples. The chief contributor has been, of course, our Secretary of State, and compared to him and perhaps some of the military brass, MacNamara and Taylor are at times examples of sobriety. This corruption of the truth is, of course, frightening not only because it misleads the public, but because it prevents our decision-makers from discerning the facts, and thus from a proper appraisal of the forces at work in the world today.

Fortunately, as Draper points out, there are still reporters who are able to correct the official picture. This honorable stance of at least a fairly substantial section of publications and TV-networks, together with the increasingly critical attitude in the Senate, may yet prevent the escalation of the war *beyond* Vietnam. Against this hubris of "the American century" Draper warns in his concluding paragraph:

> Whatever one may think about getting out . . . there is still the larger and deeper crisis of how we got into the war. . . . All great powers which have overestimated, overindulged, and overextended their power have come to grief. . . . President Johnson and his closest associates might do well to keep in mind what was said of another military victory by Pyrrhus, King of Epirus, in 279 B.C.

GEORGE ECKSTEIN

Retrospect on Moynihan

THE MOYNIHAN REPORT AND THE POLITICS OF CONTROVERSY, by Lee Rainwater and William Yancey. Cambridge, Mass.: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press. 493 pp. Cloth, $12.50; paper, $3.95.

This book is a carefully presented record of one social scientist's involvement, at the higest level, with governmental planning. The book presents the political context of the Moynihan report, the report itself, the controversies that followed in its wake, and the (hopefully temporary) political burial of both the report and its scholarly and colorful author.

Moynihan's political history and academic credentials might have led one to predict great success for him in Washington. Moynihan has been an aide to Robert Wagner and Averell Harriman, has helped in Kennedy's Presidential campaign, and at 34 he became Washington's youngest subcabinet member. As Assistant Secretary of Labor he had people such as Ralph Nader as "sounding boards."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Academically, Moynihan is well enough versed in sociological research to have been approached to contribute a chapter on the Irish, to Nathan Glazer's book on ethnic groups in New York (*Beyond the Melting Pot*). When Johnson came into power, Moynihan was one of a relatively small group in Washington whose ideas the President took into consideration. Why then did he fall?

Rainwater and Yancey find the answer to this question in an examination of the Report in terms of content and style. They also trace its history from the height of popularity—its use by the President in his Howard University address—to its final demise through the combined attacks by members of the press, the permanent government, civil rights leaders, and a variety of intellectuals.

The central purpose of Moynihan's report was to inform the President and his close advisers of the major obstacles to the sociocultural advancement of American Negroes. In brief, of ghetto life with its poor educational facilities, high percentage of unemployed, below-poverty wages for most of its employed population; of ghetto life, with its psychological climate of despair and social inferiority, high rate of illegitimacy, and ever-growing disintegration of the family. The need, the Report suggested, was clear and pressing: for a comprehensive government program to eradicate conditions which perpetuate second-class citizenship for the American Negro.

As a scholarly piece of writing, the report seems to be essentially correct. Moynihan described well the sociocultural system in which the ghetto Negro lives and its historical antecedents. His analysis in most of its essentials is in line with the available social-science literature. Why then the great controversy? The answer to this question sheds much light on the problems of the politically active social scientist. Traditionally, social science attempts to present research findings aesthetically (we believe that "truth is beauty"), objectively, unemotionally, and from a cultural relativistic viewpoint. These findings are frequently presented as "systems" (we believe that reality is "a system") whose validity are largely measured by their predictive powers. Politics, by contrast, deals with the use and keeping of power.

Power, in the words of the British journalist Henry Fairlie, is ugly and brutalizing, shoddy and unintellectual. For the scientist facts and reason must be the prime movers of events; for the politician facts and reason are slaves to be used to perpetuate power. For social-science data to be politically "useful," they must, first, be injected with enough emotion to excite the interest of those in power; they must, second, be presented in ways which help governmental elites in attaining their primary goal—keeping power. Moynihan met the first test successfully; but, through some bad luck and the deteriorating situation in Vietnam, he broke his political neck on the second. The focus on the Negro family and the use of a dramatic title—*The Negro Family: The Case for National Action*—made the report politically hot. But the focus on the Negro matri-focal family was unfortunate. The report lent itself to easy misinterpretation—Moynihan has been accused

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

(obviously quite falsely) of preaching racism—as well as sociological criticism. The latter has ranged from quarrels with his use of statistics to denials that the Negro family is disintegrating. Using hindsight, the theme of the deterioration of the Negro family was probably misguided as a political strategy. But if one remembers the problems of the author—to dramatize in order to "sell"—and if one considers that the report was meant originally only for the eyes of a small group of Presidential advisers, and if one knows Moynihan's interest in the idea of child allowances, then a focus on the Negro family is quite understandable. Further, there is the matter of systems theory.

As I understand systems theory, in any system there are a number of basic elements or variables connected in such a way that if one element changes so do all the others. From a purely theoretical point of view, it frequently hardly matters where you start a chain of change. Since the matri-focal Negro family produces people who do not adequately compete in our highly competitive society, Moynihan may well be scientifically correct when he isolates this unit as requiring help and restructuring. Politically, however, he was quite wrong in focusing on an aspect of ghetto life which is an integral part of lower-class Negro culture. Many aspects of the ghetto system could have been emphasized which would not have implied superiority of white over Negro culture and which would not have bruised the sensibilities of Negro activists. In Moynihan's defense he describes all the other ghetto problems of the Negro with considerable skill. Further, statements appearing in the press were "leaked" out and frequently exaggerated, and at times they misrepresented Moynihan's position.

All the above information (as well as much more) is carefully documented in the Rainwater and Yancy book. Its message, I think, is not support of Henry Fairlie's position that intellectuals should stay in their ivory towers away from ugly politics. The intellectual and the concerned academic have no reasonable alternative to political involvement. The book's message to me is that intellectuals who want successfully to influence governmental decision-making must understand political realities at least as well as those in power. If a comprehensive new program is sought, care must be taken to build a power base for such a program. The scientist in an ivory tower communicates to his fellows as part of a duty to share information. The scientist in politics must try to gain support for a position, and in such attempts cultural sensitivities as well as political realities must be considered.

Rainwater and Yancy have done a great service by providing a case history of a failure: a failure by government to utilize the knowledge of social science and a failure of social science to present such knowledge in a politically sophisticated manner.

MORRIS FREILICH

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

LETTERS

Interventionism Again

EDITOR:

In his comment on discussions concerning the CIA ("Anti-Communism and the CIA," May–June, 1967), Michael Walzer maintains that if one opposes secret CIA interference in Indian anti-Maoist politics, one must argue that a Maoist victory is either not imminent or would not be morally catastrophic.

The implication is that CIA interference in domestic affairs anywhere in the world is justified if a Communist victory is imminent and if, in someone's judgment, such a victory will be "morally catastrophic." Walzer reinforces this implication by arguing that the trouble with recently exposed CIA activities was that "they served political and material interests which often had little to do with anti-Communism," and that they rested upon "deliberate exaggeration" of the Communist danger. Presumably, if CIA intervention in other lands is genuinely associated with anti-Communism, and if Communists are strong enough actually to threaten capture of power, there is no trouble with CIA intervention at all.

Commendably, Walzer insists that exposure of the CIA needs to be followed by self-examination, on the part of the democratic Left, of the "myths, misunderstandings and distortions of cold-war thought that justified the CIA." I would suggest that such a self-examination might include a review of the concept, inherent in Walzer's conditions for a critique of the CIA, that the U.S. is morally justified under any conditions in intervening in the internal affairs of other nations to prevent domestic Communist victory. Such a concept is plainly incompatible with the objective of a world ruled by law among nations generally, and with the U.N. Charter specifically.

In Sherman Adams's memoir of the Eisenhower Administration, *First Hand Report*, Adams quotes John Foster Dulles at a cabinet meeting during a crucial period in the proceedings of the 1954 Geneva Conference:

> It is not difficult to marshall world opinion against aggression, but it is quite another thing to fight against internal changes in one country. If we take a position against a Communist faction within a foreign country, we have to act alone. We are confronted by an unfortunate fact—most of the countries of the world do not share our view that Communist control of any government anywhere is itself a danger and a threat.

Clearly, this attitude leaves no room for harmony with the principles of world organization which includes Communist nations possessing equal rights and protections. The U.N. Charter provides, as it must, that every nation is entitled to freedom from interference in its internal life. But if Communists are to be fought by us everywhere, they must be fought perforce within other countries. And since Communist nations have considerable capacity for reinforcing local resistance to external interference, or for interfering themselves, the Dulles doctrine consigns us to eternal brinkmanship, with the odds overwhelmingly on ultimate world destruction.

Genuine self-determination, whether by internal revolution or by elections, is precluded by the Dulles doctrine since we cannot permit the decision to go against us. In April of 1954, President Eisenhower appealed to Prime Minister Churchill for joint military intervention in the Indo-Chinese War, hoping that this would scuttle the pending Geneva Conference. In his plea he argued that the "loss" of Indo-China to the Communists was unacceptable "by whatever means" it occurred, and had to be prevented. Since he has also confessed that all reports to him at that time indicated "about 80 per cent" popular support among Vietnamese for Ho Chi Minh, he was obviously urging they be denied the chance to express that support politically. During the Conference, Eisenhower tells us in his *Mandate for Change*, he and Churchill agreed that if Vietnam were to be partitioned, "approximately half of that country must remain non-Communist. . . ." Again, Eisenhower was demanding that Vietnamese be debarred from exercising self-determination. The

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

war today has its roots in, and is still trying to enforce militarily, this Eisenhower demand, despite its rejection by the Geneva Conference and the U.S. pledge not to disrupt the Agreements forcibly.

Walzer may not agree that a Communist victory in Vietnam would be a "moral catastrophe." But in presenting criteria for evaluating the CIA's activities which make U.S. intervention in the domestic politics of other countries a matter of judgment, he is aiding in the subversion of international law generally and lending legitimacy to the Administration's Vietnam policy in particular

MAX GORDON

MICHAEL WALZER *replies:*

I'm not sure that Mr. Gordon and I agree on the proper use of the word intervention, and that makes it hard to say whether or not we disagree on other, more substantive issues. In much of the current debate, it seems to me, the word is used with no precise meaning whatsoever. There is a certain logic in that, perhaps, for there is hardly anything that the U.S. could do with regard to another country that could not be construed as intervention, if the word is taken loosely enough, or if it suits one's political purposes to attempt the construction. Making or refusing loans, giving or withholding foreign aid, selling or not selling arms, encouraging or not encouraging state visits, bribing or not bribing particular officials, financing or not financing opposition forces or local secondary associations—all these acts are obviously *and equally* intended to bolster or weaken particular governments, heads of state, political forces. They constitute the very stuff of international politics; they are the normal means of influence and pressure. Now I would suggest that it is of no help whatsoever to use the word intervention in a way that makes it simply the equivalent of international politics. Certainly, it makes no sense to be for or against intervention taken in this sense. What Mr. Gordon and I together oppose, I think, is something quite different, that is, any great-power bid for direct control of the government or economy of another country. This includes the use of foreign aid as the basis for direct political dictation (e.g., U.S. assistance to Greece, but not to Yugoslavia), or the financing and direction of subversive activities aimed at overthrowing an established government (e.g., Iran, Guatemala), or the commitment of armed forces to a civil war (e.g., Vietnam).

But it is just not possible to say anything in general about all the conceivable indirect uses of power, money, and influence. Of course, all these are "matters of judgment." What else could they be?

Good Neighbors in Latin America

Editors:

The main points made by Mr. Friedenberg in his analysis of the United States' rape of Latin America are so important and come so close to the heart of the matter that I hesitate to take issue with small things. However, there are at least two places where glib statements by Mr. Friedenberg conceal complex and perhaps instructive situations.

The first is his treatment of the career of Dr. Joaquin Balaguer, which I think indicates less that he is an unreconstructed Trujillista, as Mr. Friedenberg proposes, than that he possesses in abundance that quality which the American press refers to in Soviet politicians as "a talent for survival." Even allowing for massive American help, it is remarkable that Balaguer has retained his credibility for more than two years (as compared with about a week for Wessin y Wessin), that he defeated Juan Bosch in his "election" to the presidency and that the Dominican Republic has been off the front pages for a relatively long time. I do not say that the "election" was a genuine expression of popular will, but it seems clear that there is considerably more to the Balaguer phenomenon than Mr. Friedenberg has told us.

Second, Mr. Friedenberg says that "the OAS . . . soon degenerated into an apologist body for U.S. policy. Canada had always refused to be a member." The implication is that Canada's refusal to join the OAS and her Latin American policy generally is based on opposition to

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

U.S. empire-building in the area. I am a Canadian and I would fain have it so. But unfortunately my country's non-membership in the OAS, like her non-position on Vietnam, is a result of her fear of doing anything that might cause conflict with the U.S. Canada's policy toward Latin America has been a combination of abdication of responsibility and complicity in exploitation, and her record there is little better than that of the U.S.

These are minor points, but nevertheless significant as indications of the complexity of the problem and the confusion that has grown out of the attempt to cover naked exploitation with the cloak of good-neighborliness.

RICHARD GALLAGHER

Discrimination and Unions

EDITORS:

There is an important factual error in William B. Gould's article, "Discrimination and the Unions" (*DISSENT*, September–October 1967). The Sheetmetal Union, Local 28 did not contest the admittance of 11 Negroes recruited and tutored in 1965 by the Joint Apprenticeship Program of the Workers Defense League and the A. Philip Randolph Educational Fund. In fact, those young men joined Scott Green, the first Negro apprentice in that union (also placed by the program), very quickly after their tests and physical examinations.

In the fall of 1966, 26 of the Apprenticeship Program's applicants scored among the top 60 applicants. Whereupon, Walter Gobetz, who administered the test for the New York University Testing Service, announced that "I've been teaching for thirty years and I've never had results like that." Gobetz having clearly suggested irregularity, the union took the cue and began a lengthy court action.

Obviously, the roadblock in this case was created by an academic who, for some reason, did not believe that Negro youth from nonacademic backgrounds could test as well as they did; it certainly was not created by Local 28.

In any event, 23 of the young men are now in the union (one was drafted into the army and the other two accepted apprenticeship appointments).

Mr. Gould's dismissal of the Apprenticeship Program is nothing more than self-serving rhetoric. The fact of the matter is that the program has been called one of the most successful in the U.S. by such people as Kenneth Clark and Ray Marshall. And it is expanding beyond New York City. Recently offices were opened in Buffalo and Westchester. In the former, there have been 71 apprenticeship openings since March, and Negroes filled 20 of those posts. In the latter city there have been 42 openings, and 8 Negroes have been placed.

The WDL program does not owe its success to a slogan, but to a dedicated staff that knows how to recruit and prepare minority youth for job openings. The success is due as well to the consistent help of men like Don Slaiman of the AFL–CIO Civil Rights Department, Harry Van Arsdale, Peter Brennan, and the apprentices themselves who have come back time and again to encourage new applicants to take advantage of the existing program

RACHELLE HOROWITZ

WILLIAM GOULD *replies:*

The "important factual error" which Miss Horowitz alleges turns out to be nonexistent. While Local 28—after a court ruling which recorded years of blatant racial discrimination by that Union—did drop the color bar in 1965, it also, as Miss Horowitz herself notes, took the "cue" from Professor Gobetz and began "a lengthy court action." The Union's resistance at this late date is ominous—Miss Horowitz cannot even explain the "reason" which provided the Union with any justification for court action.

I have nothing but praise for the Workers Defense League. Moreover, my article contained complimentary remarks about some of the trade union leaders of whom Miss Horowitz speaks highly. But it simply will not do to whitewash Local 28's conduct and to say that the "roadblock" was created by others. Local 28 took its "cue" promptly and enthusiastically.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Arnold S. Kaufman

THE COLD WAR IN RETROSPECT

Four Views of the Cold War

The Cold War may be a geopolitical conflict, but it is also, and importantly, *religious* in tone and intensity. Anne O'Hara McCormick expressed the deep, simple, sincere conviction of millions of Americans when she wrote that "the crux of the Soviet battle is not primarily for physical things . . . It is for dominion over the soul. For the first time a powerful adversary not only rejects our civilization but fights to destroy everything we value."[1]

Ideological fervor was perhaps whipped up by cold and calculating politicians who wished to secure support for essentially geopolitical aims. It does not matter. For once aroused, such passions come to live a life of their own—and to react back on the calculating politicians, reshaping their minds and spirits in unanticipated ways.

The world has undoubtedly changed since President Truman announced the doctrine that bears his name. But the florid rhetoric in terms of which he justified his Cold War commitments persists in high places. Truman assured the American people that his decision to combat Communism in Greece and Turkey was forced by the necessity of choosing between alternative ways of life:

> One way of life is based upon the will of the majority, and is distinguished by free institutions, representative government, free elections, guarantees of individual liberty, freedom of speech and religion, and freedom from political repression. The second way of life is based upon the will of a minority forcibly imposed upon the majority. It relies upon terror and oppression, a controlled press and radio, fixed elections, and the suppression of personal freedoms.

Almost two decades later, in May of 1966, Secretary of State Dean Rusk reminded the American public of Truman's words:

> It is as important to defeat this type of aggression in Southeast Asia now as it was to defeat it in Greece nineteen years ago. The aggression

[1] In "Faith for a Troubled Christmas Time" (*New York Times Magazine*, December 2, 1950).

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

> against Greece produced the Truman Doctrine, a declaration of general policy of assisting other free peoples who are defending themselves against attacks or threats. . . . [Lest any American be left in doubt about the parallel he was drawing, Rusk continued,] The underlying crisis of our times arises from [a] fundamental conflict: between those who would impose their blueprint on mankind and those who believe in self-determination—between coercion and freedom of choice.[2]

As if to punctuate the Secretary of State's restrained language with an exclamation point, Vice President Humphrey more recently poured his soul onto the (luncheon) table for the Democratic National Committee, exclaiming:

> Don't run from this issue [Vietnam]. God only knows that war is what Sherman said it is—Hell. But I will tell you what's worse, Tyranny.[3]

Things have not, unhappily for American policy-makers, worked to democracy's advantage in Greece. In any event, the present rulers of Greece have informed the world that Grecian freedom requires the overthrow of parliamentary government, control of the Greek Orthodox church, censorship of the press, suppression of political opposition, and the issuance of a ban on miniskirts and, for a brief period, beards. It all sounds like a program for totalitarian control of Greek life. Undoubtedly, however, the more rabid architects of America's Cold War policies will find some way to convince the American people that tyranny is freedom and military dictatorship is democracy.

The millions of Americans who think of the Cold War entirely in religious terms have little difficulty in accepting the assurances of Greek and South Vietnamese dictators alike. For, in truth, they are after bigger game than forces opposed to freedom and democracy. They are after Satan himself. They mean to eliminate Evil. They believe that the only defensible aim of American policy is personal salvation for the millions who would otherwise be damned by Communism to eternal perdition. They may acquiesce in a policy of containment; but spiritually they favor liberation. In them, Prudence and Godliness engage in a gigantic spiritual struggle. It is all well and good to claim that those who have such views do not make American policy. But they are the ones who give the men who do shape Cold War policy their firmest and most passionate public support. And they infest centers of military power.

---

2 The *New York Times*, May 25, 1966.
3 Remarks by Vice President Hubert H. Humhprey before the Democratic National Committee luncheon, Washington, D.C., March 9, 1967.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

By contrast, there are those who view the Cold War as totally unjustified; wrong from the start, a sinister conspiracy against the have-nots of this country and of the world. They think the Cold War is entirely explicable as an expression of Western corporate greed and lust for power. From their point of view, Communist nations have reacted with reasonable tactical restraint to Western efforts to roll back power the Communists had won during World War II. And they think that Communist states, especially Russia, have been even too obliging in the face of American counterrevolutionary activity everywhere around the globe. Those who favor this strong opposition to United States policies—which, for purposes of convenience I label "the New Left Opposition"—regard the entire history of American Cold War action as morally obscene.

I am not implying that the two polar opposite positions described are intellectually equivalent. For the views of the New Left Opposition normally are based on reasoned argument, on scholarly investigation that probes deeply into the origins and nature of the Cold War. By contrast, those who adopt the religious view are, by and large, mindless and bigoted. They display little respect for the human capacity to reason and to learn the truth.

Nevertheless, it is convenient to contrast the two positions. For by so doing, it is easier to define two intermediate assessments of the Cold War that have gradually gained prominence, and that express the rapidly widening split within American liberalism.

The first of these intermediate positions is held by those I shall call "Moderate Cold Warriors." They argue that the Cold War was, in its initial stages, fully justified by geopolitical considerations. Russian hegemony among Communist states made it plausible to claim that the Red world was monolithic. Moreover, the facts of Stalinist tyranny buttressed the American moral position.

But the Moderate Cold Warriors acknowledge, even insist, that since those early days of conflict basic changes have occurred within the Communist world. Revisionism has resulted in internal changes that have pacified and liberalized many Communist states. These internal developments have combined with the gradual emergence of two great, but conflicting, power centers to produce what has come to be called *the polycentric Communist system.* The Moderate Cold Warrior no longer regards a Sino-Soviet war as a fantastic possibility. For many it is, indeed, a probability fraught with incalculable terrors. These inter- and intra-state changes have in turn strengthened centripetal tendencies within the Western camp. NATO is sick. The United States

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

is virtually isolated in Southeast Asia. The Third World plays major conflicting power coalitions off against one another. And these transformations combine to make the ideological dimensions of Cold War conflict decreasingly relevant to the shaping of sound American foreign policy.

At the same time, the geopolitical dimensions of conflict persist and are of great importance. And the ideological issues, while of diminished and subordinate importance, are still significant. The Moderate Cold Warrior continues to believe that the United States is obligated not only to shield societies in which freedom and democracy have stable institutional roots, but to carry these ideals to less hospitable climes. To a considerable extent they identify America's vital national interests with the protection and prudent propagation of freedom and democracy, and they regard those who oppose their viewpoint as neo-isolationist." Thus, Moderate Cold Warriors generally favor the American intervention in Vietnam, but anxiously urge the President to exercise restraint. And they base their support on a combination of geopolitical and ideological considerations which are each necessary and jointly sufficient to justify American policy.[4]

More specifically, Moderate Cold Warriors concede that the tensions and dangers of Cold War conflict, viewed even in exclusively balance-of-power terms, have rapidly receded in those parts of the globe where Russian power is concentrated. But the rise of an aggressive, powerful China has intensified tensions and dangers in Asia. The Vietnamese intervention was required, not only in order to stabilize power relations by containing China, but also to prove to the Chinese that the Russian policy of peaceful coexistence is correct. Moderate Cold Warriors are not opposed to revolutionary movements *per se*. They acknowledge that gradualism can be a dogma and that revolution may be justified. But in practice they tend to oppose revolutionary movements, because in a world in which great powers contend for position, revolutionary disorder normally upsets the precarious geopolitical balance essential to stability. And stability must always take precedence

[4] Paul Seabury, in his recently published book *The Rise and Decline of the Cold War* (New York and London: Basic Books, 1967), articulates this general point of view exceedingly well. C. L. Sulzberger, *New York Times* columnist, is another sophisticated proponent of this position. Strongly in support of Johnson's policies in Southeast Asia, he nevertheless had this to say about polycentric tendencies within the Communist world: "Moscow and East Europe now openly favor ideological coexistence—despite the harsh reactions of Peking. . . . The menaces to peace today are founded less upon political philosophy than on outright power rivalries and strategic positioning. The old Communist Humpty Dumpty has fallen off the Iron Curtain and shattered into pieces which Moscow can't put together again." (*New York Times*, May 21, 1967.)

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

over the potential benefits of revolution. Hence, from their point of view, American policy-makers should operate on the basis of a presumption against revolutionary movements.

The second intermediate position, the one I defend in this essay, starts from the admission that American Cold War policies had considerable justification at their inception. Though vastly exaggerated by many Americans, the ideological aspect was present and legitimate. Russian expansion was a hypothesis fully warranted by the available evidence. The Marshall Plan was in balance a creative, constructive, and responsible application of American resources to the problems of European reconstruction. NATO provided an indispensable shield for weakened parliamentary democracies.

Nevertheless, even at the outset there was exaggerated American emphasis on military response, and relatively niggardly release of our vast economic resources for more pacific purposes. Moreover, both kinds of power have often been used in ways that undermine liberal values. In Korea, the decision to cross the thirty-eighth parallel was a wholly unjustified application of military power. And our China policy has been nothing but a political ransom paid to the most fanatical and unreflective portions of the American public.

Successive U.S. governments have consistently underestimated the potentialities of Communist systems for change and diversification. Since the death of Stalin and the conclusion of the Korean War there has been no ideological and little geopolitical reason to refrain from embarking on a whole range of initiatives for reducing the tensions of the Cold War.

Though wary of unilateral commitments, it should be fully acknowledged that the country's vast economic resources thrust inescapable responsibilities upon America. The U.S. must learn to apply this wealth so as to reduce the already dangerous and unjust, but still widening gap between industrial nations and the impoverished nations of the Third World. But in any and all circumstances the U.S. must try to deploy its affluence in ways that strengthen the scope and authority of multilateral and supranational agencies. The neo-isolationist charge is true if those who make it mean to imply that Radical Liberals ask the United States progressively to reduce its unilateral commitments to the vanishing point, and at each stage to re-inforce the power and authority of supranational bodies. But to call such a view "neo-isolationist" is to abuse the language.

Moreover, such radical liberals believe that the Vietnam tragedy magnifies a fact that was evident to all detached observers during

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

McCarthy's heyday—that the United States is underdeveloped morally and intellectually, and therefore politically; and that possession of the vastest material resources ever entrusted to one nation in the history of mankind makes *America*, and not the Soviet Union or China, the chief threat to the peace of the world today. Admitting all defects, American institutions are, in general, morally superior to Communist institutions. But the incredible concentration of U.S. power enlarges her potential for international mischief many times over. It is not principally arrogance that makes the U.S. so dangerous, but the fusion of immaturity and vast power that exists here. Small errors, which would have negligible consequences when made by weaker nations, are capable of producing nuclear catastrophe when made by the United States.

In the sections that follow I shall develop these lines of argument, comparing them throughout with two of the other three positions briefly described in this section: those held by Moderate Cold Warriors and by the New Left Opposition. By contrast, the view that the Cold War is a titanic struggle for the redemption of mankind, though enormously important in American politics, is so lacking in moral and intellectual merit that it is not worthy of serious examination. That those who share this belief are politically powerful is one of the principal measures of our social immaturity.

Competition, Capitalism, and the Cold War

Americans supported Cold War policies that evolved after the Truman Doctrine was proclaimed in 1947 because they believed Russia was expanding aggressively. They believed Russia's imperial ambitions threatened both vital national interests and cherished moral values. The men who inspired our early actions thought primarily in terms of geopolitical considerations. But once President Truman announced that the contest was between the free world and a world enslaved, ideological rather than great-power considerations increasingly dominated popular and, to a lesser extent, governmental attitudes about the Cold War.

The thrust of American moral concern was, however, quite ambiguous. Everyone emphasized protection of freedom and democracy. But those who, in some degree, supported the American position, disagreed sharply about what "freedom and democracy" meant. While some virtually identified these ideals with defense of the free-enterprise system, others thought that the Amercian private-property system was not worth a limb of a single American soldier. Unless this divergence is recognized, early support for American Cold War policies cannot be fairly assessed, the widening split among American liberals cannot be understood.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

My own view is that American security was indirectly threatened, our vital national interest seriously jeopardized, only during the brief period of post-World-War-II Russian expansionism. America's Korean intervention was a partially defensible episode. And an increase in the military threat to American security was virtually absent during the Cuban missile crisis.[5] By contrast to almost all previous crises, the Vietnam intervention actually impairs vital American interests and threatens to undermine her security.

Furthermore, the only things about American capitalism that are, from a moral point of view, worth protecting with American lives, are its competitive market mechanisms. For these alone contribute to the growth of liberal institutions; these alone are important in stimulating creative, productive effort. But on these points, thoughtful individuals of every political persuasion are revisionist.

Marx's early attacks on capitalism were based on his profoundly Christian belief that institutionalization of human conflict in a competitive market is evil. He was convinced that private ownership of capital is the necessary and sufficient condition of a competitive market economy. Hence, he viewed capitalism as a great engine for inflicting harm on human beings. He sought to replace an industrial system based on conflict by a system based on Christian love. But he believed, quite rightly, that this redemptive aim cannot be achieved by means of moral education, that revolutionary reconstruction of existing institutions is required.

Marx's conviction that private ownership of the means of production, distribution, and exchange as an *essential* condition of competitive institutions is important. For though he developed an analysis of monopolistic capitalism, Marx was certain that an *international* capitalist system could never master what he called "the anarchy of production"—the internal dynamic that resulted in increasingly violent booms and busts. Few thoughtful, knowledgeable individuals, East or West, accept any of these doctrines any longer.

In all the relatively developed Communist states aversion to competitive market mechanisms is disappearing; Yugoslav thinking and initiatives are gaining acceptance. Thoughtful Communists increasingly believe that without economic competition intolerable inefficiencies persist—and that the worst moral consequences of competition, those to

---

[5] For example, Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., writes that at the time of the crisis, because the United States had a "2 to 1 superiority in nuclear power targeted against the Soviet Union, the shift in military balance of power would be less crucial than that in the political balance" (*A Thousand Days*, p. 796). It seems to me that this kind of preponderant power made the additional military threat nonexistent.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

which Marx so prophetically called attention, can be eliminated by democratizing industry.

Moreover, reflective Communists reject Marx's doctrine of *immiserization—i.e.,* the view that the working classes within capitalist societies are inevitably reduced to a subsistence level of existence. They recognize that capitalist systems can eliminate the anarchy of production without abolishing private ownership of the instruments of production. They admit that Keynesian manipulation of key economic levers can, when combined with welfare programs, mitigate the worst forms of social discontent, thereby reducing the danger of violent revolution to the vanishing point.

Conversely, even Americans who most devoutly believe in the virtues of the free enterprise system admit that Communist states can create free-market economies without reintroducing much, if any, private ownership of capital. As Gilbert Burck recently described it in *Fortune* magazine,

> Both the Soviet Union and East Europe are in the arduous process of reforming their economies by introducing market forces, and in the bargain they are vouchsafing their citizens increased personal liberty . . . (T)aking the movement as a whole, it is one of the most important events in world affairs since the end of World War II, and one of the most important economic happenings since the Bolshevik revolution itself.

Burck goes on to make a claim which would be surprising when found in any magazine, and is astonishing when it appears in one of the leading journals of American capitalism:

> Yugoslavia may yet boast more of a market economy, as Adam Smith broadly conceived of a market economy, than any other nation on earth.[6]

Moreover, as Michael Harrington has pointed out, the history of the Cold War demonstrates that American foreign policy need not bow to economic interests. The Marshall Plan strengthened the area of the world that competes most vigorously with American business. It is absurd to suppose that the CIA-sponsored Guatemalan coup was engineered by United Fruit, or that our interventions in Cuba and the Dominican Republic are principally to be understood as efforts to protect American economic interests. Moreover, even to conceive American policy in Southeast Asia on the model of economic imperialism is to engage in cold war metaphysics hardly less absurd than that practiced by fanatics of the Right. U.S. military expenditures in South Vietnam

6 "East Europe's struggle for Economic Freedom," *Fortune,* May 1967, p. 125.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

are, conservatively, running at the rate of over $2 billion a *month*. The annual gross national product prior to the escalation in South Vietnam was about $1.7 billion a *year*.[7] If the U.S. government had used the sums it spends to pursue the war on a program of peaceful pacification, it could probably have bought all the land in South Vietnam at full value, distributed it equitably among the peasants—with enough left over to resettle and provide pensions for any landlords and political masters whose lives might be endangered by the consequent reconstitution of South Vietnamese political life. The idea that affected American corporations dominate Cold War policy through imperialist calculations of economic interest is blatant nonsense.

I am not claiming that American corporate interests are either benign or uninfluential. The oil industry still exerts decisive influence on certain aspects of American policy. And in South America, Central America, South Africa, and elsewhere around the globe business interests influence our actions in significant ways. But neither protection of oil, nor protection of these other interests, are essential conditions of the health of the American economy.[8] Corporate interests have not been nearly as influential in the shaping of American foreign policy as some members of the New Left Opposition contend. Liquidation of American interests abroad would produce only minor dislocations in the American economy.

Though many on the New Left argue as if they believed that the conscious aim of American officials is to defend American economic interests abroad, and that this intention is the decisive determinant of Cold War policies, there is another, more sophisticated analysis that deserves further consideration. Some members of the New Left Opposition contend that American policy can be *explained* in terms of the protection and promotion of corporate interests, in much the way that the demolition of an airplane by a sidewinder missile can be explained.

Whatever particular causes may operate at a given time, and however often other missiles may miss their mark, the constant and decisive determinant of the path of a sidewinder is the functional goal for which

---

[7] Computed from statistics avaiable in the *United Nations Statistical Year Book, 1966.*

[8] In 1964 the sum of $44.3 billion was invested directly overseas; in 1965, $49.2 billion. In both years foreign investment was only about 5 per cent of gross domestic investment. Of this total investment abroad, 60 per cent went to Canada and Europe. Of the entire amount, oil and mining accounted for about 40 per cent. Assuming that most of this portion of the total went to areas outside Canada and Europe, it becomes clear that an enormous percentage of the small investments that went to the Third World, were made by oil and mining industries—principally oil. *Cf.* Elizabeth Jager, in "Survey of Current Business," the *Federationist*, September, 1966. Referred to by Michael Harrington, in "American Power in the Twentieth Century," DISSENT, September-October 1967, pp. 643-44.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

it is constructed—to destroy targeted aircraft. Similarly, whatever mixture of causes may operate at any particular time, the constant and decisive determinant of American foreign policy is the aim for which our entire decision-making apparatus was constructed—to protect and promote American economic interests. Occasionally policy may miss its mark. Benevolent men may participate in operating the policy-making apparatus. None of this affects the basic explanatory point—that the functional goal of the entire mechanism is to serve those who control the American economic system. (I should add here that I have encountered this point of view, not only among members of the New Left Opposition, but also among small businessmen to whom I have occasionally spoken about the war in Vietnam.)

The explanatory scheme just described, easily handles apparent counterexamples, such as the Marshall Plan, opposition to the Suez invasion, the Point Four program, President Kennedy's withdrawal after the Bay of Pigs disaster, the Peace Corps, support of the Vietminh against French colonialism in the early stages of the Indo-China tragedy, and many other Cold War episodes. For careful analysis reveals that each apparent counter-instance is actually explainable in terms of the functional aim posited in the theory. Thus the Marshall Plan was meant to forestall a massive threat to the entire system of free enterprise. Opposition to the Suez adventure was not only consistent with protection of American oil interests in the Middle East, it actually promoted those interests by casting the United States in an unfamiliar and attractive role. Kennedy refused to invade Cuba because doing so would have destroyed the fledgling Alliance for Progress that was designed to serve larger corporate aims. And so on.

Now it would be futile to argue each particular case. I want instead to make a more general theoretical point. The theory the New Left Opposition puts forward is so resourceful, it can be made to explain any apparent counter-example. But, even more important, it is so amazingly fertile, it could have been made to explain the opposite of what happened as well! Thus, had Kennedy authorized the invasion, had we not tried to stop the Suez invasion, had we not proposed the Marshall Plan, had we not developed the Peace Corps, had we not tried to cut our losses in Korea—all this and more would have been even more easily explained in terms of the promotion of corporate interests. Indeed, the New Left can argue that American middle-class policy is dictated by old-fashioned imperial ambition. (But *whose* ambitions; the oil industry with its vital stake in Kuwait, Iraq, and other Arab countries?) *And a theory that explains every possibility explains noth-*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ing. A theory that is that strong is empty. And this is my basic objection to the interpretation of the Cold War proposed by the New Left Opposition—it is at best a useful heuristic, a guide to the search for *one* of the important determinants of American foreign policy. But, as often deployed, even by very scholarly individuals, it is vacuous because it explains too much. It lacks intellectual basis because it destroys all significant distinctions.

Freedom, Democracy, and American Incompetence

American intervention in Europe at the beginning of the Cold War did serve the cause of freedom and democracy. Russia was aggressive and expansionist. Stalinist tyranny was cruel and oppressive. The argument that Russia was motivated solely by desire to establish defensive buffers has a peculiarly scholastic flavor. Nor does it matter whether, in the perspective of history, Russia or the United States was more to blame for the rapid build-up of tensions. The important question is whether Western statesmen were, *at the time*, *warranted* in believing that the U.S.S.R. was dangerous. On the evidence available *at the time* the conviction that the Soviets threatened the territorial integrity of sovereign European states was amply justified. Any doubts political leaders may have entertained evaporated when Communists overthrew the regime of Benes and Masaryk in Czechoslovakia.

While it is probably true that the invention of the atomic bomb helped precipitate Truman's strong response to the Greek rebellion, it is also true that the ruthless use of Russian power in Czechoslovakia—a nation that had a strong parliamentary tradition, the second highest per capita income in prewar Europe, and that had become a symbol of appeasement—was the crucial factor in convincing all European nations not already overrun by Russian armies that defensive measures had to be taken. Sweden, Norway, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Denmark, as well as Britain, France, Italy, and the United States reacted swiftly and strongly. Stalin had overplayed his hand; and it would have been foolish for the leaders of any parliamentary democracy to have concluded that Russia had no further aggressive designs. Whatever the actual intentions of historical actors may be, statesmen must base their policies on reasonable presumptions, not wishful thinking. The United States did not have to coax NATO into existence; member states developed the defensive alliance with enthusiasm. They welcomed the Marshall Plan with equal warmth.

But even Stalinism and the facts that supported the hypothesis of Russian aggressiveness were not sufficient to justify the American claim that it was defending freedom and democracy. Also necessary was the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

further fact that, by and large, the countries we were aiding *were parliamentary democracies in which liberal institutions had already been brought to a reasonably high pitch of development.* In other words, the United States was not in a position of having to nourish tender shoots of freedom, or to pacify and teach the population of, for example, Great Britain, how to be free and democratic. The point is absolutely fundamental in understanding why Cold War policies in Europe were mainly justified, but have proved absolutely disastrous almost everywhere else on this globe.

In Europe, American efforts met with considerable success. We did help revitalize German and Italian democracy. We did help the established parliamentary democracies in Great Britain, France, the Benelux countries, Denmark, and Norway to recover from the brutal punishment that had been inflicted on them during World War II.

But the simple fact is that our efforts succeeded almost exclusively in those countries *that already had the institutional and economic base essential to the nourishment of liberal institutions and values.* And even Japan had forged the economic base for a functioning democratic order. Elsewhere in the world, U.S. intervention may have staved off Communism, but it has not scored notable success in building liberal communities. And the main reason for these failures is, I believe, that American power is not matched by the necessary competence or wisdom. The United States is itself a morally and politically underdeveloped society. In most of the countries of Europe which we aided we had much to learn and little to teach about the processes of liberal society.

Consider, by way of contrast, our record in Vietnam. "The other War," the effort to "pacify" the countryside, is, after 11 years and many billions of dollars spent, still "at the beginning of a beginning"—to quote Senator Mike Mansfield's words. Imagine the outcry if the U.S. Army was to be put in charge of flagging Head Start programs in Mississippi and Alabama. Yet the recent decision to transfer authority over pacification efforts to the American military command in South Vietnam is no less ludicrous. Men engaged in a shooting war, exposed to a totally different cultural experience, are being asked to teach the Vietnamese how to achieve stability, freedom, and democracy. The notion that their efforts hold any promise of success is nonsense on stilts.

Would American civilians fare better? First, the best of them are needed to complete the work of building a decent society right here in the United States. Second, the typical civilian is ill-equipped to understand the problems of a proud Asian people who have had a

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

totally different cultural experience. Finally, even if civilians had the will, the skill, and the cultural sensitivity to do an effective job, they would be undercut in their efforts at every juncture by a military force understandably preoccupied with its military tasks. Indeed, that is precisely what happened during nine futile years prior to escalation. We sent many men of good will and superior competence to Vietnam as members of the AID mission; they failed, utterly and completely. The reason for the shift of authority from civilians to army in Vietnam is not that anyone really believes military men are likely to do a superior job. It is simply that the military command wants to eliminate any source of conflict with their armed struggle against the National Liberation Front. They want to get on with their main job—which is to crush, not pacify, the rebellion in the South. And Vietnam only reveals in a particularly crude and outrageous form the incompetence and insensitivity of American efforts to convey freedom and democracy to peoples around the globe. While the Rusks and Humphreys proclaim opposition to tyranny, United States' actions destroy prospects for political self-determination. The only protection any society has had against our blundering incompetence has been due to the resilience and integrity of its own national institutions, the pride and courage of its members.

Stability and Revolution

Nor should it surprise anyone that the United States, which after 100 years has failed to bring the blessings of freedom and democracy to the overwhelming majority of those liberated from slavery, should also fail to bring those blessings to societies much less ready to receive them. The arrogance of our policies is, in this respect, surpassed only by the ignorance of those charged with implementing them.

Even if Moderate Cold Warriors are inclined to accept the view that the United States is not competent to *promote* freedom and democracy in societies that lack institutional prerequisites, they may feel—and rightly—that the spine of their general position has not been fairly revealed. For they believe that maintenance of a stable international system should be the central aim of American foreign policy. And they believe also that though the U.S. may falter in particular situations, prospects for political democracy are closely identified with American national interests. Hence, failure of American "stability-operations" are setbacks for liberal causes. Thus most Moderate Cold Warriors support the Administration's Vietnam intervention because they maintain that it is necessary to deliver a stabilizing rebuff to China and, thereby, to serve the larger cause of political freedom.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Because stability is the Moderate Cold Warrior's fundamental concept and central goal, it is important to examine his views about this subject carefully.[9] I am convinced it is here that one finds the nerve of disagreement that today divides American liberals on foreign policy.

As the Moderate Cold Warrior sees it, American security is ultimately dependent on the stability of the international system; that is, on the effective balancing of powerful coalitions. He believes that this has been the greatest accomplishment of America's Cold War containment policy: all around the globe, powers were brought into stable balance. The chief constructive outcome of the Cold War in Europe for example, has been the reduction of traditional intra-European strife. Only in Asia is the precarious balance that was achieved seriously threatened by a fanatically aggressive China. Both Russia and the United States have a vital interest in re-establishing the fragile stability there threatened by irrational Chinese leaders.

It is the maintenance of stability that justifies the bilateral and multilateral treaties into which America has entered wih over 40 nations. Only through the firm defense of the present balance can underdeveloped nations be saved from falling under the domination of Communist tyrannies. Wars of national liberation must be opposed, not primarily because they are intrinsically bad, but because they jeopardize international stability. Anyone who refuses to acknowledge the basic soundness of this analysis, who is willing to permit those who control liberation movements to win by default, in effect counsels that the United States abandon historic responsibilities. They are, therefore, properly labeled "neo-isolationists."

The position just described has the ring of cool objectivity, prudence, realism. It is, however, immoral and ultimately imprudent. For the emphasis placed on stability in practice leads to counterrevolutionary action; worse still from the point of view of stability-seekers, in the long run it results in international chaos. At least, these are the conclusions that I shall defend in the rest of this essay.

---

9 For example, Paul Seabury thinks that stability in Asia depends on our convincing the Chinese that the Soviet convictions about peaceful coexistence are right. He writes: "In Vietnam, were the outcome of conflict to include the extension of Chinese power in Asia and among revolutionary movements there, this would not simply signify a defeat for America (and for the larger cause of political freedom); it would serve also as a disastrous refutation of Soviet theories and policy, and would further undermine its already challenged legitimacy within the 'Socialist camp'." (*Op. Cit.*, p. 151.)

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The functional meaning of "stability-operations" for the industrially underdeveloped world is counterrevolution. Consider the policy pattern the United States typically pursues in its efforts to maintain international stability.

A revolutionary movement, almost inevitably containing some Communists, moves to take power. The proportion of Communists in the revolutionary force may be tiny, as it was in the Dominican Republic, or significantly large, as it is in South Vietnam. The *possibility* that the Communists will take power causes the United States to view these revolutionary developments as a threat to international stability. American policy-makers reason that to permit these forces to triumph in a new area of the globe will whet the appetite of major Communist powers for further "aggression." Thus, willingness to permit revolutionary triumph is tantamount to "appeasement" on the model of Munich.

To forestall such an outcome, the American government first tries to "pacify" the natives by offering them a carrot. But such efforts almost inevitably fail. For in the absence of genuine democracy, the United States will support the very elements within the revolutionary society which exploit and oppress the now turbulent masses. American civilian "advisers" are unable, even with the best will in the world, to persuade ruling elites to relinquish their exploitative power. And those elites find ready allies among American military "advisers." Conor Cruise O'Brien elegantly analyses the problem that confronts the United States in any such situation:

> In the poor world, . . . the oppressed are not minorities but the masses, and they are confronted by ruling classes that cling avidly to their traditional large share of scarce resources. The interests of the ruling classes are simply not consistent with any social change in the interests of the people as a whole. The landowners, usurers, sweat-shop owners, corrupt political bosses, and parasitic bureaucrats who now control in varying combinations most governments of the third world are precisely those people who must be deprived of their *raison d'être* if there is to be a social revolution. Why should these people allow themselves to be peacefully ousted as long as they have the money to pay others to defend their interests? Such defense need not always be as obvious as the employment of white mercenaries by the government of the Congo. Rulers of most poor countries, by reason of that very poverty, can recruit mercenaries from among their own people. This method is less conspicuous than the Congolese method, but it is also less reliable because the danger of defection and mutiny is inescapable when national forces are used in a revolutionary situation. . . . If this line of reasoning is correct, and recent history seems to support it, then it is not likely that social revolu-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

> tion will occur without political revolution; political revolution will be opposed by force, and cannot prevail without greater force.[10]

But, for the reasons O'Brien cites, the indigenous ruling class is not likely to be able to muster the force necessary to repulse the revolutionaries without outside aid. At the same time the United States, given its desire to stabilize the situation and its further tendency to view the threat of Communism as absolutely inimical to the growth of freedom and democracy, is quite responsive to a request that it buttress its pacification efforts with military assistance. So the ruling elite turns to the United States, and that powerful nation responds by providing her suppliants with a stick. If the ruling elites do not request aid, the U.S. is likely to act anyway—as we did in Iran and Guatemala, and as we tried to act in Cuba. One way or another, American policy re-inforces counterrevolutionary efforts to maintain existing injustice—all in the name of stability, freedom, and democracy.

I have already explained why I believe that the United States has neither the power nor the competence to promote freedom and democracy in societies in which prerequisite institutions have not sufficiently matured. But the American counterrevolutionary posture in the world is a greater evil, and reflects a deeper domestic disorder, than failure to acknowledge our limitations. For the American populace is well insulated from the human agony that exists in underdeveloped lands—agony that, as Conor Cruise O'Brien points out, is unlikely to be eliminated without bloody revolution. And once having intervened, Americans are further protected from grasping the full extent of the additional suffering caused by their armies.

It is not simply that we are a bourgeois society—with all the defenses bourgeois societies have for making human suffering invisible. We are a society that has used its technology to erect a gigantic screen through which filter only those images from around the world that will not unduly discomfort our people. We have automated and computerized bourgeois misperception—we have created great technological engines for preserving our complacency. We are the first people in human history to have produced a technology for creating institutional indifference, and then to have made of that institutional indifference an essential ingredient of our conception of the good and virtuous life. Other malevolent societies may have been wicked; we are the first society in human history to have achieved automated amorality.

The extent, nature, and remediability of chronic suffering in under-

---

[10] "The Counterrevolutionary Reflex," *The Columbia University Forum*, Spring 1966, p. 21.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

developed nations creates a presumption in favor of revolution. The idea that, given the alternatives normally available to these societies, gradualism is typically preferable to revolution is morally fraudulent. The facts of misery, eploitative power, and greed in the Third World argue against such a comforting illusion. Few nations in history have achieved a humanly tolerable stability based on industrial and cultural development without bloody revolution; certainly not the United States, which underwent two revolutions; nor Britain, France, or Russia. And, despite the undoubted advantages of peaceful, self-determined industrial development within tolerably democratic societies, no nation has developed its economic potentialities without enormous human suffering. Putting to the side other long-term benefits, it is not at all clear that the cost in human misery of British or American industrial development exceeded that imposed on the Russian people by its Stalinist masters. This is not the whole moral story; but it is a part of it that needs to be reiterated and emphasized if false righteousness is to be avoided.

I have offered a *general* analysis. A presumption in favor of revolutionary movements has been defended; no more than that. Revolutions may be cruelly wrong. The proper course for even a poor nation may be evolutionary rather than revolutionary. And this will tend to be so to the extent that the prerequisites and traditions of an authentically free society have been established. Within the framework of the analysis there are all sorts of distinctions to be drawn; all sorts of qualifications to be made. But those refinements are the business of another essay. Here it is my intention only to develop the broad lines of an analysis that, in a number of important respects, runs counter to the conventional American wisdom about revolutionary movements.

Suppose a given society is better advised to take the evolutionary rather than the revolutionary path. Suppose also it embarks on the revolutionary course all the same. And suppose, finally, the revolutionary movement is Communist dominated. Does it automatically follow that U.S. intervention is justified? From the fact that a given Communist-dominated revolution is unjustified, it does not follow that unilateral American intervention—military or politico-economic—is right. In general, revolutions are the product of human misery sufficiently intense for men to put their lives and the lives of those they love in jeopardy.

Intervention typically compounds the mischief the revolution may itself be doing. Few who oppose the American intervention in Vietnam have many illusions about the quality of political life that would result if the National Liberation Front comes to power in South Vietnam. But

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

one does not have to romanticize the rebel cause to oppose an American military onslaught that enlarges and intensifies the suffering of the Vietnamese people, diminishes rather than enhances their prospects for a good life, despoils their land and threatens us all with nuclear extinction. From even the legitimate claim that a given revolution is morally wrong, it does not follow that preventive intervention is morally right. For intervention of even a nonmilitary sort is likely to lead to military intervention, and it surely cannot be obvious that bloodshed in putting down a Communist revolt is invariably better than the blood spilled in making the revolution. Nor is it obvious that the sins committed by rebellious forces justify greater sins by counterrevolutionary armies.

The thrust of these remarks is that there is a presumption in favor of bloody revolution in lands in which massive exploitation and tyranny transparently occur. This is so *even if the revolution is dominated by Communists*. For it has become increasingly clear that "wicked" Communists are no better able to forecast and shape the future than are "benevolent" freedom-lovers. Both are amply endowed with arrogance, ignorance, and stupidity. Both are, in any event, limited in their power to control the future.

During the past 15 years the two major triumphs of Chinese policy have been in Korea and Vietnam. In Korea, by hurling American forces back to the Thirty-eighth parallel, China proved to the world that it is a power to be reckoned with. In Vietnam China watches the Americans bleed, the Vietnamese grow increasingly disaffected, and the Asian masses grow more anti-American, without having to expend much of its material resources or any military manpower. Wherever else China has tried to play a controlling role—in Indonesia, Africa, and Latin America—it has suffered rebuff and humiliation. And while American statesmen like to think that these diplomatic defeats are primarily a result of their cunning policies, the facts are typically otherwise. Everywhere the gap between arrogant Chinese pretensions and China's power to effect events has been the principal cause of failure. Communist China would probably have failed had the United States disappeared from the face of the earth.

The Soviet Union, through its armies, achieved great successes in the postwar period. Yet, since 1948, Eastern Europe has been the theater of unanticipated centripetal change and the emergence of a polycentric system. And again, this development has been due less to American policy than to reassertion of nationalist priorities combined with a maturation of the Soviet system that owes little to external pressure, and much to the dynamics of a growing industrial order. In fact,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

changes similar to those that have occurred and are occurring in the Soviet Union are happening in every Communist state. For in each a liberalizing dialectical process, rooted in a common commitment to industrialization, is taking place.

Though new forms of tyranny inevitably result during each Communist society's postrevolutionary period, there is a difference. For bread is provided, and industrial development is promoted. It is not Maoism to recognize that freedom and democracy mean little to people that remember too vividly the misery that has gone before.

But memories die, and tyranny produces new discontents, new forms of personal insecurity. The demand for institutions that mitigate oppression, promote human dignity and personal development, is reasserted. The prerequisites and consequences of a growing industrial order—principally education and economic sufficiency—will insure that this happens. The scientific and technological communities will be the first to hold an oppressive regime to ransom—and the ransom they will demand will be not only affluence, but relief from arbitrary power. Rule of law and personal autonomy will be established; at first, in limited spheres and only precariously. But over time new seeds of discontent will be sown; the demand for freedom will grow. For the exercise of freedom is contagious unless those who have it are insulated by feudal walls from those who do not. Only ruthless oppression can block these liberalizing tendencies; and such ruthlessness would prove industrially self-defeating.

Liberal progress may, therefore, receive many setbacks. A "cultural revolution," a purge or reign of terror, will occur. But as soon as repressive measures begin to prove industrially harmful, counter-repressive social processes will develop. The dialectical movement in the direction of greater personal liberty will recommence.

There is nothing inevitable about such developments. The world's history tells of too many madmen who have frustrated rational calculations that justify belief in the *probability* that certain things will happen. But statesmen should base the main lines of policy on reasoned probabilities, not outside chances.

Failure to act on the basis of probabilities rather than possibilities lies at the heart of the Vietnam catastrophe. The Munich analogy, which Rusk and Humphrey are so fond of invoking when defending American actions, rests on nothing more substantial than the fact that Hitler and Mao have both used an aggressive rhetoric. Beyond that the differences end. Germany was a highly developed military and industrial power. Its armies moved across frontiers without provocation. Ger-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

many moved against societies that had mature parliamentary institutions. At every critical juncture Hitler backed his bellicose language with steel. There was little prospect that internal change would de-fuse that German bomb before a German move to blow up the world.

By contrast, China is weak industrially, weak in terms of military technology. China is only tenuously connected to either North Vietnam or the National Liberation Front, has not moved its armies across the contested frontiers unless provoked, and is not subverting or seriously threatening established parliamentary democracies. At every critical juncture China has acted with prudent restraint—a fact that every student of that country admits. Finally, there is *every reason* to believe that, given China's deep commitment to industrialization, its energies will be harnessed for internal tasks rather than outward mischief if some of the tremendous military and political pressure America exerts is relieved. This also is the sober judgment of almost every China expert outside of government. And should this highly probable judgment be true, it would give the liberal dialectic a greater chance to function. When a bitterly disaffected Chinese technician was recently asked by an equally disillusioned diplomat friend who had decided to defect whether he too would leave China if he had the chance, the technician replied:

> Despite my supposedly unacceptable background and despite the fact that my immediate superiors know fairly well what my sentiments are, they will do nothing against me.
>
> Our leaders have established a simple, old fashioned warlord autocracy using witch-doctor mumbo-jumbo. To compete with the modern industrial nations, huge numbers of technicians are needed. Anyone trained to the necessary degree of technology, however, can see through their mumbo-jumbo. So the people needed most by the regime are the most disaffected.
>
> In my case, there are a growing number of politicians who take my ideas as their own. I don't care. I have ideas that they don't. My security is based on the number of people whose status comes from taking credit for what I create.
>
> [When the diplomat told his friend that these views made him want to stay too, the technician replied,] Please don't. When I'm on the Central Committee I'll invite you back for a big celebration. Meanwhile get as far away from here as you can.[11]

I would take issue with the technician only in what he says about

---

11 Tung Chi-ping, "Growing Up in Mao's China," the *London Observer*, March 5, 1967, p. 11.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Mao's China being simply another warlord regime. It is a warlord regime *committed to industrialization*. And that makes all the difference.

The emerging conclusion is that among available alternatives the United States may best serve both its interests and liberal values by supporting or at least not opposing, revolutionary movements dominated by Communists. In South Vietnam, if the only realistic choice were between a government dominated by Marshall Ky and his ilk or Premier Ho and his ilk, it is fairly clear that the differences would be, from a moral point of view, not sufficiently consequential to justify jeopardizing a single American life.

This does not imply that a regime subservient to the Communists of the North would be the best of all possible governments. Nor am I suggesting that the posited alternatives do exhaust America's present options. I simply want to stress that from an authentically liberal point of view, given a narrow range of real alternatives, Communism would normally be preferable to supporting landlord regimes through force of arms. Cold War perspectives are typically irrelevant to problems of the Third World—a position acknowledged, for example, by Pope Paul in an encyclical on problems of underdeveloped nations.[12]

Stability or Order

Recognition that stability as the focal aim of American policy has counterrevolutionary consequences, and that promotion of these consequences is presumptively immoral, does not itself justify abandoning the Moderate Cold Warrior's point of view. For if, in the long run, the peace of the world and the security of the United States depend on the maintenance of international stability, then frustration of revolutionary movements in underdeveloped countries might be a moral price that is worth paying. The tribe that lives on the margin between famine and survival may feel justified in killing a certain percentage of newborn infants; but there is no morality in it.

In fact, stability and the balance-of-power theory that underlies its adoption as the most important goal of foreign policy are irrational because they are self-defeating. The stability achieved in the short run promotes international chaos and imperils the survival of mankind in the long run. A stability orientation is not a requirement of an intelligent, properly realistic foreign policy. To the contrary, stability is regarded as the *summum bonnum* by men who have forsaken the serious pursuit of an order that transcends the international system. For we live in a jungle—a Hobbesian *state of nature*.

12 "On the Development of Peoples," *The New York Times*, March 29, 1967.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The central claim made by more sophisticated defenders of America's Vietnam policy is that international stability required the intervention. They argue, had we not acted in firm though limited ways in Southeast Asia, the precarious balance of Cold War power would have been disrupted; the world would be teetering on the brink of nuclear holocaust. This claim lies at the core of the Administration's insistence that it really seeks peace. And there is no reason to doubt its sincerity.

But the recent Middle East crisis makes it abundantly clear that even the short-term consequences of our adventurous effort to stabilize Asia have been chaos and disorder. For it is highly unlikely that the Israeli-Arab War would have erupted had it not been for America's unilateral intervention in Vietnam. Russia is unlikely to have encouraged Nasser; Nasser is unlikely to have taken the risks he did take; U Thant is unlikely to have acted so precipitously in withdrawing the U.N. forces from the Sinai border; Israel would have been as unlikely to doubt the credibility of quite definite U.S. commitments—had they not all thought that the unilateral U.S. involvement in Southeast Asia would embarrass the United States and make doubtful any serious U.S. efforts to solve the crisis in the Middle East. The net result of the episode is that the credibility of American commitments has diminished as an indirect result of our engagement in an Asian war that is supposed to make our willingness to live up to our commitments more credible.[13]

But the mare's nests in Southeast Asia and the Middle East is only an example of the jungle environment in which nations live. Underlying such episodes are two factors that intensify developments promoting a state in which, in Hobbes's words, "the life of man [is] solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short"—increasing disparities in the wealth of nations and nuclear proliferation.

The growing gap between the affluent, industrialized nations of the world and the have-not states will be a source of inevitable future conflicts—conflicts that are all the more likely to occur because material wealth correlates so highly with color of skin—*unless* creative efforts are made to avoid these long-term consequences. The United States has about 6 per cent of the world's population and more than a third of the world's productive resources.[14] In justice *and in prudence* she therefore bears the heaviest responsibility for reversing world-wide economic

---

13 I wrote this passage before General de Gaulle analyzed the larger meaning of the Mideast crisis in similar terms. Unfortunately, de Gaulle, like Hobbes, fails to look beyond international anarchy to civil society.

14 Computed on the basis of statistics available in the *United Nations Statistical Year Book, 1965*, by Dr. Daniel B. Suits, University of Michigan.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

trends. If Americans think they can avoid the worst during their own lifetime, they should consider the prospects of the yet unborn.

But even if America did acquire the political will, which she presently lacks, to meet this historic responsibility, she would be in a bind. For unilateral economic commitments create interests, demands, and conflicts that too often result in military commitments. And then the fat is in the fire—as it presently is in Vietnam. Such involvements generally undermine the growth of the institutional prerequisites of healthy self-rule. Hence, some alternative way of meeting her obligations must be sought by the United States. And what holds for the United States in this instance holds, in lesser degree, for all the other more developed nations of the world.

The conclusion that forces itself on the industrialized nations, the United States in particular, is that they must work to close the affluence-gap through supranational agencies where possible, through multilateral agencies where necessary. They must begin to channel resources in ways that *replace stability* with *legal order*. It will soon be technologically possible for small nations to produce nuclear devices that can be carried into the Moscow subway by a Paraguayan agent or pumped into Boston by an Algerian submarine. Thus the national origin of the attack can be well concealed. In these circumstances neither Russia nor the United States are likely to deliver a nuclear reply to Paraguay or Algeria respectively.

A nonproliferation treaty is a usetul step toward inhibiting such dangers; but no more than a tiny step. For the task of policing such a treaty would be enormous; and not every nation will sign. Hobbes insisted that men could not abolish the state of nature's "war of all against all," could not establish "peace" without creating civil society. His prophetic insight has never been more poignantly relevant to international affairs.

The creation of a world state is no longer the Utopian aspiration of idealistic politicians, but the urgent, practical, realistic requirement of statesmanship in a Hobbesian world. What the gnawing fact of the relative impoverishment of nations suggests, the threat of nuclear proliferation confirms.

But a world state is not going to emerge, like Venus,, from the sea of our present discontent. Rather we shall have to take short steps in its direction—one following another, patiently, but insistently. Hence every opportunity to rely on multilateral rather than bilateral relations ought to be pursued. Every effort to create and utilize supranational agencies ought to be made. And this obligation falls most heavily

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

on those nations that are currently most powerful; for they have the defensive power that makes them less liable to suffer vital injury through pursuit of this realistic goal. This is why the decision of the United States to bypass the United Nations in Vietnam is perhaps the greatest of the many tragedies of that pointless war.

In other words, the United States ought to become "neo-isolationist" if by that phrase is meant the progressive reduction of unilateral commitments in favor of multilateral action where that is the best alternative open to us, and support supranational efforts whenever possible. But "neo-isolationism" is in this sense perfectly compatible with the demand that the United States apply its vast power and resources to the solution of grave international problems. The amount of national resources it allocates to the problem of world poverty must be multiplied many times over. The full weight of its massive power must be placed behind the effort to induce the nations of the earth to pass from the state of nature to civil society. And in this respect few aims are more important than mutual tension reduction and disarmament. But to do any of these things, so far from being isolationist in spirit or substance, is just the reverse. For it constitutes an even greater involvement with other nations than is presently the case—but "involvement with," not "intervention in."

Directions for Policy

Yet we must live in the world as it is. There will be an interim—prolonged by political realities—during which the United States will have to meet existing threats and crises. How should it do so given the analysis of the Cold War that has been developed in this essay?

1. The American military force need not be dismantled. Nor should it be precipitously removed from the various strategically important areas of the world. The United States government cannot escape the duty, imposed by the very fact that we do live in a Hobbesian jungle, to maintain its power so as to defend its vital interests. But this in no way requires us to maintain the incredible concentrations of power, the capacity to "kill" all nations of the world many times over.

2. But we should redefine our vital interest so that it embraces first, security, and second, the defense of reasonably stable, mature, equitable parliamentary democracies. We have no obligation to defend parliamentary democracies like those that exist in South Africa and Rhodesia. For democratic practice in both those countries is restricted by law and by custom to small, white, fantastically exploitative minorities. On the other hand, the hopeful parliamentary systems of India,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Ceylon, and Israel, among others, deserve our support, and *when all else fails,* our unilateral protection against genuinely foreign aggression.

3. Moreover, our power should be deployed loosely. The noose of steel we have constructed around China is, whatever our intentions may be, objectively provocative and aggressive. Corresponding with the loosening of our military hold on certain areas there should be an effort to educate the American public so that it can think more flexibly about the nature and threat of Communism. Our main enemies in the world are not Communists—they are any forces that perpetuate poverty, racism, and those virulent aspects of nationalism both within and outside our country which promote disorder and undermine the efforts to build a world community.

4. We should make it clear to the peoples of the world that there is not a single American economic interest abroad that is so vital as to justify military intervention in the affairs of another sovereign state. We should recognize that our market power is a much more effective and desirable means of protecting legitimate American interests than our military power. No nation in the world can afford to ignore the American power of consumption and production for very long—as the history of the Arab oil boycott after the recent war in the Middle East makes abundantly clear.

5. We should often support and seldom oppose revolutionary movements. Even bad revolutions are typically better than the results of unilateral American interventions intended to forestall them. It is almost inconceivable that any revolutionary movement can succeed unless underlying discontents are so intense, forms of exploitation and oppression so severe, that general popular sentiment has reached a boiling point.

In brief, we should abandon the Cold War, substituting for it reasonable national prudence combined with determination to help the world move toward social justice and a supranational order. And when liberals like Vice President Humphrey say, "I want to be tolerant, but I can't see the difference between containment of communism in Europe and Asia,"[15] we who believe otherwise should be equally tolerant even while we relentlessly work to remove from office those who are so unreflectively, recklessly ignorant.

---

15 In the *Atlanta Journal and Constitution,* interview with Saul Pett, April 10, 1966.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Two New Titles from The Free Press

CONTINUITIES IN THE STUDY OF SOCIAL CONFLICT

By Lewis A. Coser, *Brandeis University*

In *Continuities in the Study of Social Conflict* the collected essays represent a unity of outlook seldom found in the study of conflict theory and a fresh attempt to deal with social violence and its functions. Professor Coser supplements and up-dates his now classic *The Functions of Social Conflict* through an analysis of the diverse, recent findings and theories in the field—many of which are a direct result of his earlier work. In addition to other subjects, the author examines the nature of power, the theories of the anti-colonialist Frantz Fanon, the fragmentation of the Communist bloc, and the current super-power confrontation.

1967 282 pages $7.95

MAX SCHELER

An Intellectual Portrait

By John Raphael Staude, *University of California, Riverside*

An engrossing account of the remarkable twentieth-century philosopher-sociologist who has been called the Catholic Nietzsche. Professor Staude examines Scheler's shifting political and philosophical allegiances and relates them to his highly unconventional private life and to the social and cultural confusion of pre-World War II Germany. Professor Staude brings to life a controversial man impassioned by the idea of remedying the lack of leadership and ideals in his time. Many facets of Scheler's inner life and his relations with such men as Max Weber, Ernst Troeltsch, Henri Bergson, Werner Sombart, and Georg Lukacs are brought to light for the first time.

1967 313 pages $6.95

THE FREE PRESS
A Division of The Macmillan Company
866 Third Avenue, New York 10022

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

A dissenting view of the Victorian Age

CHARLES BOOTH'S LONDON

A Portrait of the Poor at the Turn of the Century
Edited by Albert Fried and Richard M. Elman

ONE OF THE classics of sociology, Charles Booth's *Life and Labour of the People in London* has been almost unobtainable for many years. The extensive selections which Mr. Fried and Mr. Elman have made from the original seventeen volumes re-establish Booth's importance as a pioneer of social investigation, while their editors' introduction relates Booth's findings to contemporary preoccupations with poverty and welfare, at the same time showing the extent to which Booth, a conservative Victorian businessman, was shaped by his own time. Yet for the general reader the astonishing thing about these selections will be their vitality and compelling readability. Booth wrote down what he saw with a sociologist's eye for the relevant but a novelist's grasp of character and environment. The book provides an engrossing and unforgettable record of life at the end of the nineteenth century.

$7.95, now at your bookstore

PANTHEON
25th ANNIVERSARY YEAR

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Vietnam, Berkeley, the East Village, Harlem, and the other challenges to the liberal conscience today

The Radical Imagination

Edited by

Irving Howe

In twelve years of publication, *Dissent* magazine has become the living conscience of American liberalism. This *Dissent* anthology, introduced by Michael Harrington and featuring such writers as Claude Brown, Harvey Swados, Paul Goodman, Ignazio Silone, Lewis Coser, Lionel Abel, and Mr. Howe himself, focuses that conscience on the great social problems of the sixties.

"Intelligent, literate, and nonauthoritarian . . . European radicals like Leszek Kolakowski, Stuart Hampshire, and Abram Tertz are represented, along with many of *Dissent's* regular contributors . . . No one radical vision animates all of these writers, but they share a perspective that is too frequently inaccessible . . . Recommended."

—*Library Journal*

$7.95 at bookstores

NEW AMERICAN LIBRARY

Publishers of Signet, Signet Classic, and Mentor Books

A SUBSIDIARY OF THE TIMES MIRROR COMPANY

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED